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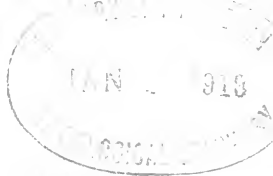
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THE  
SCRIPTURAL ARGUMENT  
AGAINST  
APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION,  
IN  
ITS FABULOUS GENEALOGY,  
ITS CLAIM OF SUPREMACY FOR PETER,  
ITS GRADUATED SCALE OF MINISTERIAL ORDERS,  
AND  
ITS PERVERSION OF THE RITE OF  
“LAYING ON OF HANDS.”

*In Four Lectures.*

BY  
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THOMAS STRATTEN.

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## PREFACE.

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“APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION.—The line in which the ministry of the church is handed on from age to age: the *corporate* lineage of the Christian clergy, just as in the Jewish church there was a *family* lineage.”—*Dr. Hook’s Church Dictionary.*

“THE Jewish church” traced its lineage to Abraham. The Jewish priesthood traced its lineage to Aaron, and through him up to Abraham. Under the Jewish dispensation, the people had their succession as well as the priests and Levites. The succession in both cases had its origin in the same root, and the larger, that of the people—the church, included the smaller, that of the priesthood. If, by virtue of a clearly traced lineage, the members of the Levitical tribe discharged sacred offices, by virtue of a clearly traced lineage, the members of the other tribes enjoyed the benefit of those offices. The “family lineage” was not that of the house of Aaron, or of Levi, but that of “the house of Israel.”

The family lineage of the Jewish church, then, when the terms are explained and understood, is found to contain something more than enters into Dr. Hook's theology. A special case, for the benefit of the "Christian clergy," is derived with singular infelicity from a general case, in which, whatever might be the advantages of a succession, they belonged to the whole nation. Let the whole case be presented, and it will be found to furnish, not a comparison to illustrate and confirm the theory of Apostolical Succession, but an argument for the destruction of that theory. That argument is opened, not exhausted, in the first of the following Lectures.

The Romanists crown the theory of Apostolical Succession in the Christian clergy generally with an individual succession in the line of the popes in particular. For the analogy of this office, since it is single and exclusive, a corporation *sole*, phrases, used loosely and vaguely, as in the definition we have quoted, is that of "the Jewish church," will not serve. The office being filled by one succeeding to another, the type and model must be singular also, and they go therefore direct to Aaron. Their pontiff is, they affirm, like to Aaron. The succession of their pontiffs like to the succession of the Jewish high priests. The unity of the Roman church, under the one pontiff, like to the unity of the Jewish church

under the one high priest. Dr. Hook's Dictionary furnishes no light on this question. Many of the party for which he has assumed the office of a guide need help here. They see that the doctrine which *they* are taught on the unity of the church places them in a false position. They feel that, while one of their party watchwords is "catholic unity," they are, in fact, on their own principles, only a schismatical fragment of a church which is itself in schism, and they are shown no very near or practicable road out of this position. One need not wonder that they become dissatisfied with their guides, and that they turn for relief to the rest which is boasted and proffered in submission to the assumed successors of St. Peter. Here, as the most convenient point, the bridge is thrown across the gulf which once separated protestantism from popery, and many have passed by it from one territory to the other.

The course of the argument pursued in the first of these Lectures brought the author upon ground which commanded this place of passage. Is he too sanguine in cherishing a hope that none, who may give the second Lecture a candid reading, will afterwards be disposed to trust themselves on that fragile and treacherous bridge? His object has been to show an open way to liberty and safety, in an impregnable fortress of

Protestantism, at the very point where many, bewildered by uncertain guides, have surrendered themselves to be tied, and bound, and hoodwinked in the fetters of Romish thralldom. How far he has succeeded, his readers must judge.

The family lineage of the Jewish church was a natural succession, observing, through all its parts and links, the natural relation between father and son. The high priest entailed the office of high priest on his first-born son. The priests in common entailed their office in common on all their sons. The Levites entailed their office, with its peculiar work, on all their sons; and the members of all the other tribes entailed the privileges of the Abrahamic covenant on all their children. It was not Aaron, but Abraham, who obtained and conveyed the promises. Yet Dr. Hook can see no difference between this family lineage and what he calls the "corporate lineage" of the Christian clergy.—The third of the following Lectures will open to the reader diverse essential differences, and show it to be at least very doubtful whether that one order, which rising upwards out of those which remain below, claims, in its exalted position, the exclusive relation of paternity to all the rest, as well as authority over them, has any scriptural right or standing for itself in the Christian church.

In Dr. Hook's definition of Apostolical Suc-

cession, the line of the ministry in the church, with graphic and felicitous phraseology, is described as "*handed on from age to age.*" The procreating power is assumed to be in the *hand* of the prelate, and to be conveyed by the "laying on of his hands."—In the fourth of the following Lectures, an effort is made to expound the true meaning of the venerable scriptural rite of "laying on of hands"—to rescue it from the power, and disencumber it from the pretensions of those who undertake to "hand on" the Christian ministry by it—to unfold its relationships as they are diffused through the wide system of revealed truth—and to point out the varied cases in which it may still be legitimately and intelligently employed.

The author had intended to add a fifth Lecture, on "The True Relations of the Christian Ministry to the Saviour, to the Apostles, and to the Church." He found, however, that this field would be too wide to be traversed in a single Lecture. And, moreover, should he ever be permitted to enter on it, he would be desirous of treating the subject in a style somewhat different from that which is unavoidable in the exposure of arrogant and destructive error. He has expounded the large and catholic principles on which such a treatise might rest in the closing part of the second of these Lectures. He thinks there is a region in

which one may get so closely into communion with the truth as to be filled with its light, and be absorbed with the beauty of its features, the harmony of its proportions, the *kindnesses* of all its relations—that in that region the feelings called into exercise are unmingled in their purity and sweetness, and every utterance becomes emphatically a “speaking of the truth in love.” Yet he has been concerned in *these* Lectures to lead his readers, not within the confined walls of a dreary citadel filled only with warlike stores, nor through paths so choked by the thorns and briars of controversy as to be difficult and painful to the feet, but rather to the strong positions thrown up by nature herself in the hills that are round about the spiritual Zion, and which have their luxuriant foliage and diversified prospects for the eye, as well as their enduring firmness for the defence, of those who desire to “stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.”

HULL,  
*September 2nd, 1845.*



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## LECTURE I.

THE FABULOUS NATURE OF ECCLESIASTICAL GENEALOGIES SHOWN,  
BY COMPARING THEM WITH THE TRUE GENEALOGIES OF THE  
OLD TESTAMENT; OR, THE USES AND ABUSES OF GENEALOGY.

“Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies.”—1 *Tim.* i. 4.

A MAN'S genealogy is the history of the line in which he has descended. There has been to every individual a line of descent from Adam, the father of us all, down to himself—a chain formed of successive links—each link definite, entire, and, for a time, palpable—every additional link growing out of that which preceded it—the whole chain stretching onward, as link after link was formed, until the individual himself was included in it. If he be a parent it ends not with himself, but is still lengthening, and may continue to lengthen, until it shall reach from the day of Adam's creation to the day of the world's conflagration. Nor will the fire, which is to burn up the world with all else which it contains, destroy a single link of this chain, but, on the contrary, show it forth to view, a line of

human existence stretched across the gulf of time, and connected, on either hand, with eternity.

Yet this chain, which will ultimately be manifest to every eye, can, at present, be traced by no man through all its backward links; nor, whatever be his power, or wealth, or fame, can he command the preservation of his own line downward from the shadows of oblivion which have spread so widely over the past, and are continually gathering to rest upon the future. No English genealogy can be traced higher than to Norman or Saxon ancestry. The individuals who are able to trace their pedigree so high are units among millions, who must content themselves with a knowledge of their ancestry confined within the limits of some one or two centuries.

There is this singular anomaly in the condition and circumstances of our knowledge: that while we have discovered, and can describe, the relations which exist between the planet in which we dwell and the heavenly bodies by which it is surrounded—can write the history of their revolutions in the past, and foretel the precise course of their revolutions which are yet to come—while we can carry our scientific classifications through the wide range of the animal and vegetable tribes, unfolding their mutual relations, and determining the order in which they have ever stood, and will, in all coming time, continue to stand—while we can open the grave of a pre-Adamite world, and decipher and arrange the monumental remains of living creatures

whose races have perished in some awful convulsion of nature, leaving no descendants behind; yet we cannot recover the lost links of our own relationship—we cannot trace the channel that has conveyed the blood which flows in our own veins—we cannot, beyond a few generations, tell what were the names of our own fathers—we cannot discover the footmarks of those paternal steps which, by their wanderings from home and kindred, decided the place of our birth and the land which we should call our country—we cannot relate the labours of those paternal hands which contributed to build up the structure of our social system and our national greatness—we cannot connect ourselves with the thoughts and feelings of those paternal minds which often pondered the destinies, while they were furnishing and cultivating the inheritance, of their posterity.

Had the principle been assumed and acted on from the origin of the human family, that it would be an interesting, and might be a profitable, department of instruction to convey down to every branch the knowledge of its descent—to enable every rising member to trace upwards the entire line of his ancestry—at how small an expense of labour and skill might the work have been accomplished! Tradition and symbol in the first place—the engraved or written table subsequently, as the substance of the information increased and the power of communicating by writing was obtained, might easily have secured the object. Those who have

never turned their minds to this question may be surprised at seeing into how small a compass a genealogy of four thousand years may be compressed. They will find in sixteen verses of the third chapter of Luke the genealogy of our Saviour's humanity, with every link entire, up to Adam. It is the department of knowledge which, at the starting-point of the human mind in its boundless career, was nearest at hand, most easy in its communication, most likely to be universally interesting ; but which, having once been neglected and lost, can never be restored, until, by the completing miracle of Divine power in our history, the entire human family, in its whole generations and relations, shall be raised up from the grave.

There was a period when this loss was not universal. There was a people who, for many generations, possessed this genealogical knowledge of their whole ancestry entire and complete. It should suffice, to rescue this department of knowledge from unwise depreciation, to mention that the Jewish people held it as a sacred deposit, like the oracles of God, exclusively their own. In those oracles they found its fountain-head, kept it constantly in view, and traced onward the stream flowing from it through more than two millenniums of patriarchal ages. To preserve and perpetuate this knowledge in their respective tribes and families, was one special provision and requirement of their Theocracy. Every family had its name and place upon the soil, which it was not permitted to alienate.

The beautiful face of nature, in the lines and divisions marked by lot upon it, received the indelible impress of the genealogical stamp. The tables of genealogy, sacredly preserved, were the title-deeds to an interest and share in the land, as well as to all civil and religious privileges. It was a striking peculiarity in the case of every individual subject of that Theocratic government, that he could, at all times, tell the precise position which he occupied, and the relation which he sustained, in the progress of the human family—that he could trace upwards the distinct line of his ancestry to Jacob, Isaac, and Abraham, and through them, still higher, to Noah, and to Adam. Or, going at once to the fountain-head in Adam, he could trace the stream downwards until it touched the boundary-line of his own family inheritance in Canaan; and that boundary-line became the channel which received his own patrimonial portion of the stream, and through which it continued unceasingly to flow.

It may be asked, What were the advantages of this genealogical knowledge? They were various. To prepare your minds to enter into these advantages and appreciate their value, think for a moment of the case of an individual who knows nothing whatever of his parentage—who has been cast upon the world, the abandoned offspring of vice or calamity, and is unable to trace out a single link of his relationship to any member of the human family. How solitary must he feel amid the millions by whom he is surrounded! How prone to contrast

his isolated state with the condition of others who are bound together by the affections which grow out of the varied relationships of life ! The streams flowing from these affections—of which multitudes drink without thinking of their value, because they are so common, and connatural with them, a part and parcel of their ordinary existence—appear the more precious to him, because they have always been denied to his thirsty lips. How actively, often how morbidly, does his imagination work on the probabilities or the possibilities of his origin ! How eagerly does he hail, and pursue, any light which promises to throw a single ray upon the mystery of his being ! How bitter his disappointment, if it has excited him in vain, and goes out leaving him in his original darkness ! Let him find sympathy, form marriage ties, found a family himself—still, how drear a blank surrounds that point of his history which to them he would most like to illustrate, and the strength of his parental feelings only makes him more deeply conscious of his own primary and irreparable loss.

Put into contrast with this case that of the Jew, who knew and revered his whole ancestry up to Adam. That point which presents the most dreary blank in the history of the former opens a most wonderfully illuminated frontispiece and preface to the history of the latter. The eye never tires in perusing the characters which rise with venerable garb or prophetic mantle before the view. The tongue has an exhaustless domestic theme on which



to enlarge. The hand is to add another line to the page, to inscribe the name which will represent himself to all posterity, and then to convey it—the last, and most precious, of all bequests.

The man who could stand upon a clearly ascertained and authentic genealogy, going through a long line of illustrious ancestors up to Adam, must have known his true position in society, and have had one of the strongest reasons for respecting himself. Instead of feeling himself severed from the ties of kindred, and isolated from human affections, he might have imagined the love of the first human pair as coming with unbroken stream upon himself, and gathering, as tributaries, the prayers and blessings of many parental hearts in its course. There would be a closer and more realizing connection with the events of history, when he could trace his own relationship to those concerned in them. The electric line of human sympathies, when every link in the chain of communication was entire, would convey the whole power of the events with undiminished force upon him. There would be one of the strongest stimulants to virtue and religion, when the names and excellences, not of individuals only, but of a long line of pious ancestors, lived in the imagination, the memory, and the heart, and he felt himself the heir of ancient honours, prayers, blessings, and promises. Last, not least, while genealogical honours rested, not on antiquarian researches into musty chambers, and mouldering monuments, and doubtful legends, but

on public records, well authenticated, and sacredly preserved, there was no room among the Jews for fables like those which had been invented and imposed on all other nations—there was no misty antiquity in the distant gloom of which all kinds of incongruous forms could be shaped out by those skilful in deceit, and be made to pass with the credulous multitudes for Divine realities—there was no vacant ground in the long vista of past ages where systems of error might be constructed, impervious to the light of heaven, and filled with the lying wonders of the false Spirit.

Even now, an accurate and comprehensive genealogical knowledge—a knowledge of our ancestors, in their names, migrations, and religions, could it be recovered and universally diffused, would be one of the most effectual instruments to clear away all the false systems of superstition and idolatry which at present prevail upon the earth. Through whatever devious and gloomy paths we might trace our way upwards, we should come out at length into the clear and open field of the patriarchal dispensation. We should find that the most ancient religion, the religion of our *oldest* fathers, was the most simple religion, the religion most like that of the New Testament. Under the legitimate influence of a *true* antiquity, we should be a people prepared, not to bow our necks to the yoke of a papacy or a priesthood, but to walk with the Lord himself, like Enoch, in the privilege of direct communion, and to be blessed, with faithful Abraham, while we are

acknowledged as his seed, and heirs according to the promise.

It is in a fabulous genealogy, and a low and obscure antiquity, that error builds her seat and finds her congenial elements. She has done this in constructing the theory of "Apostolical Succession." The leading principle assumed in that theory is, the truth and authority of an ecclesiastical genealogy—that a spirit of life is infused into the act of ordination which gives it a procreating power. The individual who receives ordination connects a paternal relation with the hands from which it comes. It is alleged that this paternity must in some way be manifest, and well assured, through all ascending links, until you come up to the hands of an apostle; and that through the unbroken links of this lengthening chain alone can the grace of ministerial authority and sacramental efficacy be conveyed.

Let us try if we can test the character and workmanship of this chain. It stretches only across the last eighteen centuries; let us see if it be as good and strong as the older and longer chain, which stretches across the preceding four millenniums. It professes to have interests incalculably more important depending on it; let us see if it be proportionably firmer in its materials and cohesion. Let us compare the antiquity of monks and priests with the antiquity of patriarchs and prophets—the genealogies of Oxford and Rome with the genealogies of the Bible. It may

then perhaps appear that there are cogent reasons, arising from the case, to enforce on us the apostolic injunction, "Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies."

At the period when the apostle wrote this epistle to Timothy the public tables of the Jewish genealogies had, in some way or other, been destroyed or lost. Eusebius attributes their destruction to Herod, who, it will be remembered, was an Idumean by birth, and gives the following account of his reasons for depriving his subjects of a treasure so invaluable to them, and which, when lost, could never be restored:—

"Now whenas unto that time the genealogies, not only of the Hebrews, but of them also who, lineally descended from ancient proselytes, as from *Achior* the Ammonite, and *Ruth* the Moabitess, and those who came out of Egypt with the Israelites and mingled with them, were recorded among the ancient monuments; Herod, considering that the Israelitical pedigrees would avail him nothing, and being pricked in mind with the consciousness of his baseness of birth, burnt their ancient recorded genealogies, supposing thereby to make himself to be thought to come of noble parentage, when none other, assisted by public records, were able to bring their pedigrees from the patriarchs, or ancient proselytes, or such as were called *Georae*, strangers born, and mingled among the Israelites. Yet some few studious in this behalf, having either kept in memory the names of their ancestors or

copied them out of ancient rolls, have got unto themselves their proper pedigrees, and glory much that they have preserved the remembrance of their ancient nobility.”\*

This passage of Eusebius throws much light upon the words of our text in the epistle to Timothy. When the question of genealogy was no longer one of universal, easy, and authentic settlement from the public records, but every individual, concerned for the honour of his pedigree, was driven to the accidents of private transmission, of family documents, of doubtful traditions, of infirm memory, there would be an opening, on the one hand, for all kinds of fabulous inventions, and, on the other, for all kinds of disputatious questionings. These had evidently become one source of inconvenience and trouble to the infant church. Reasons for preference in the selection for sacred offices, or for additional deference to those employed in these offices, would be urged by the Jewish members, on the ground of these uncertain, often fabulous, genealogical distinctions. The same spirit, which has subsequently swelled itself out into the full-grown pride of a fabulous ecclesiastical genealogy, then showed its young aspirings in its claims to a distinguished parental genealogy. The mystery of iniquity in this, as well as in every other form which it afterwards assumed, had begun, under the apostle's eye, already to work, and was thus by the apostle's

\* Eccles. Hist. lib. i. chap. 7.

pen plainly indicated and rebuked: "Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies."

It will be our object in the present lecture to examine the nature of the claims which the theory of apostolical succession, or, in other words, the theory of ecclesiastical genealogy, puts forth to apostolical paternity. There is only this alternative in the case—truth or fable. The truth, in a question of genealogy, lies within small compass; and if it be an integral portion of the great system of spiritual truth connected with man's salvation, and his eternal interests in any way depend upon it, it may be assumed that the great Author and Guardian of truth, has, in his providential arrangements, secured some mode for its preservation and manifestation. The genealogies of the Theocracy, one design of which was to furnish a link in the chain of evidence to the Messiahship of our Lord, show, till that design was accomplished, the exercise of this foreseeing wisdom and providential care. They furnish a model of what *true* genealogies should be. Let us present that model. In doing this we shall advance one important step in the work of exposing the fabulous nature of ecclesiastical genealogies by showing—

I. That they do not *authenticate* the apostolical paternity which they claim.

One characteristic difference between truth and fable is that the latter, addressing itself to credulity, expects to be listened to with deference on

the authority of its own great swelling words, uttered from some high or mysterious place; while the former, coming into communion with her auditors, invites their investigation, and proffers her proofs or vouchers. We shall find this difference in the case before us.

The genealogies of the Theocracy have their origin inscribed in the pages of holy Scripture. The names of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the twelve patriarchs, are, at the present day, as familiar to us as household words. How much more familiar and interesting to the Jews—their descendants! The seventy, into which they had multiplied on their coming into Egypt, are inscribed in the Book of Genesis,\* and repeated in the Book of Numbers.† The families, into which they branch and multiply, carry their pedigree with them out of Egypt as their title, and that of their children, to a portion of the land to be divided by lot amongst them. The genealogy is the only entail which can legally carry downward the estate. The registries are so carefully entered, and the tables so sacredly preserved, that not even the convulsions of the Babylonish captivity can disturb their general integrity. The habit of attending to the registries has so rooted itself in the national mind and customs, that the people can be more easily torn from their native soil, than severed from their genealogical stock. If, even during the calamities of the captivity, any individuals neglect their

\* Gen. xlv. 8—27.

† Num. xxvi.

registry, they lose, on their return, their standing and privileges among the people. Late as the period of the Incarnation, the preservation of the records enables the Roman government to enrol the Jews for a tax, according to the residence of their fathers ; and hence Joseph and Mary, being of the house and lineage of David, take their slow and painful journey to Bethlehem.

There is a case recorded both by Ezra and Nehemiah which shows the extreme care taken by the Jews in preserving their genealogies, the importance they attached to them in settling questions relating to office, as well as to residence and property, and the consequences which resulted from any informality or neglect in securing the proper and authenticated entries. This case is entitled to more special attention because it will recur again, at another place, with an important conclusion following from it.

“And of the children of the priests : the children of Habaiah, the children of Koz, the children of Barzillai (which took a wife of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite, and was called after their name) : these sought their register among those that were reckoned by genealogy, but they were not found : therefore were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood.”\*

Now, observe these individuals had tradition—had presumption—in all probability had, what was to themselves, clear and satisfactory knowledge of

\* Ezra ii. 61, 62.



their descent. They had moreover a plea to excuse informality in the troubles of the captivity. But none of these pleas would avail. There was a register of genealogy, and they were not found *written* therein ; therefore, “as polluted,” were they put from the priesthood.

How would the advocates of ministerial grace by ecclesiastical genealogy, come out of an examination by those who decided this case against the claims of the children of Habaiah, of Koz, and of Barzillai ? We sometimes find them employing language like the following :—

“The prelates who at this present time rule the churches of these realms, were validly ordained by others, who, by means of an *unbroken spiritual descent* of ordination, derived their mission from the apostles and from our Lord. This continual descent is evident to every one who chooses to investigate it. Let him read the *catalogues* of our bishops ascending up to the most remote period. There is not a bishop, priest, or deacon among us who cannot, *if he please*, trace his own spiritual descent from St. Peter or St. Paul.”\*

High sounding words are these ! But any power which they carry with them will be found, not in themselves, but in the place from which they come. It is an oracle speaking from its place of mystery, but uttering a fable.

The first indication of oracular illusion to which

\* Dr. Hook. Two Sermons on the Church and the Establishment.

we point is found in the half-parenthetical clause as to the bishop, priest, or deacon tracing his pedigree, "*if he please!*" *Has he not done it then?* Is it such a trifling affair that it may remain waiting for his volition? Or, is it so *very clear and indisputable* that he need not trouble himself farther till "*he please?*"

It would have been more to the point—more truth-like—more in the order of proceeding to an important conclusion on which such momentous interests depend, if we had been told what Dr. Hook himself, or what any other, standing upon the same claims, had actually accomplished. Surely, if the people are to be satisfied that the boasted grace of this succession is in truth conveyed to them, and if all who minister out of the line of succession are to feel convicted of an unauthorised intrusion into holy offices, the work, preliminary to the argumentation on the claims, should be the publication, properly authenticated, of some one individual's actual pedigree going upwards to an apostle. Let some one specimen of this privileged race, with all his genealogical honours clearly shining on him, be presented to the public eye. Such a case would furnish a basis that would at least look truth-like, on which the logical structure reared by the parties might rest.

Yet such a specimen, however beautiful, and venerable, and entitled to the admiration of the public eye, should not satisfy the parties generally who felicitate themselves on being in the succes-

sion. No one of them, looking at the solemn bearings and awfully important consequences involved, should be content to suspend the knowledge, in his own particular case, on a mere caprice of the mind's volition—"he can if he please." If he *can*, it is not if he *please*. If he *can*, he should feel it to be at his peril if he does not do it. If the present regeneration and pardon, and the eternal safety of the flock to which he ministers, depend on the certainty of his being lineally descended from an apostle, then, before he assume the tremendous responsibility, he is bound, by all the considerations which can weigh with a rational and virtuous mind, to make, first himself, and then those who are to receive grace by him, quite sure upon this vital point. No labour, no cost, no travel should he spare—no rest should he take, night or day, until he possess the indisputable genealogical document, clear in the whole line, and firm in every link of the chain. This should he place before his eye as he crosses the threshold of his sacerdotal charge. To this should he earnestly entreat the investigating and admiring eye of every member of his flock. This should he ever carry with him, as the most precious of all his possessions, dearer to him than his right eye, and, were it not that without that member he could not dispense the sacramental grace, dearer even than his right hand.

How is it that, since any one of the bishops, priests, or deacons could "trace his spiritual de-

scent from St. Peter or St. Paul, *if he pleased*," it does not please any one of them to do it? There is scarcely any department of intellectual labour, either connected with their profession or foreign from it, which some individuals of their number do not cheerfully undertake and skilfully execute. How diligently have they cultivated every obscure nook and corner of classic soil! What word is there which they have not traced to its root! What sentence, difficult or defective, which they have not toiled to elucidate or restore! Are they doing justice to their professional reputation, leaving higher considerations out of the question, while they neglect the richer treasures of their genealogies, and permit the dust of ages to accumulate around them, and, it may be, the stealthy worm to feed quietly upon them!

Perhaps, however, the worm has no power over documents which are necessary to authenticate the conveyance of such mysterious and supernatural functions. If any bishop, priest, or deacon, selected at random, may commence the work of tracing his spiritual descent, with the certainty of a successful termination of his task, all the documents necessary in the case must have been preserved entire and immaculate. Such a preservation must have in it something miraculous. The uncertainty and deficiency of man's pleasure must have been provided against by the certainty and completeness of the Divine pleasure. The documents necessary to authenticate the genealogy of every individual in

question exist, or they do not. If they do not, it is fable to say that any bishop, priest, or deacon can trace his descent, "if he please." If they do, it is miraculous care which has preserved them, and that miraculous care exercised on behalf of a race whose pleasure has not hitherto been found in the path of its first, most obvious, and most imperative duty. Instead of the flippant assertion on which we have been commenting, and which is altogether unbecoming so grave a subject, let all bishops, priests, and deacons, who claim any authority on the ground of an assumed descent from St. Peter or St. Paul, give us the satisfactory proofs, from well-authenticated and accessible records, of their true lineage—each one showing the unbroken line which terminates in himself. If, like men in earnest, consistent, and truthful, they set about this work, and accomplish it, they will find themselves, and be able to show to others, the manifestation of a miraculous care in preserving to them, uninjured and complete, the materials necessary for accomplishing their task. If it does not please them to undertake the work, or if commencing they fail in its execution, they must not complain if we charge them with first giving heed, and then giving utterance, to a fable.

What if it should prove that, since it has not pleased them to undertake the work, they have not even attempted to estimate the difficulties it would present? There is a peculiarity connected with episcopal genealogy, which is found in no order of

nature, and no analogy of official transmission. It is this: that there must be three ecclesiastical fathers combined for every episcopal reproduction; that is, three bishops are required in the ordination or reproduction of every one.\* Now this fact introduces a difficulty in tracing the lineage of every bishop, leaving the priests and deacons who depend on them out of the question, the amount of which exceeds all ordinary powers of calculation; for when any existing bishop begins the work of tracing up his ancestry, he has to remember that there were three episcopal fathers engaged in his ordination. To the ordination of each one of these three older fathers had been necessary; so that, in the first step from the starting-point, his attention may possibly be diverted and distracted into nine collateral lines. Let him cross and recross these, and make them out to his satisfaction, and then, at his next step, he may have three times nine to find; and so in every step higher—the last number may still have to be multiplied by three. He would surely find no small amount of labour, and accom-

\* This triple episcopal conjunction for the purpose of episcopal reproduction, is enjoined in the canons called Apostolical, and in the canons of the Council of Nice, and is adopted in the general practice of episcopal churches. If the object of these canons was to give greater security for a true apostolical descent, they betray the weakness of human devices and temporary expedients in matters connected with religion; inasmuch as they do, in fact, throw suspicion on the period prior to their inaction, in a case in which invalidity, once admitted, could never by any subsequent regulations be rectified, but, as no fresh infusion of apostolical

plish no very enviable task, in tracing his perfect lineage through only the three last and recent centuries of the Reformation.

Suppose that, by traversing, times without number, and in all directions, the roads which conduct from one city to another in our own country, he has completed this part of his work, and takes a breathing time on the eminence he has gained to contemplate the labours yet before him, another difficulty, somewhat appalling, here arises. The multiplying threads of the labyrinth which he has been treading may now stretch outward, and lead him out of these realms across to the continent, and round about to one and another, if not to all, of its episcopal sees. Having reached the period at which Rome held ecclesiastical supremacy in our country, he may find an Italian, a German, or a Gallic bishop, here and there assisting in ordination, or even installed by translation; and where then will end his wanderings after the ascending line of his pedigree?

It need not be affirmed that, to the prophetic grace could be obtained, must, of necessity, go on multiplying itself beyond all power of remedy in the future. They also throw additional difficulties into that future by declaring, in effect, that no certainty can be found in any single line of descent; and then by introducing, with triple lines of descent, a complexity into the case which would go on increasing from generation to generation, until at length (as is now the fact) the genealogy of the so-called Christian priesthood would become as inextricable, and impracticable in tracing, as is the theogony of the myriads of deities who people (fabulously) the temples of Hindostan.

eye of the apostle, the interior of this labyrinth, trebling its mazes at every step, lay open and exposed; but, if it did, could he have employed a word more descriptive of its nature than that which he has inserted in our text—"endless genealogies!"\*

There is another point here worthy of consideration. Suppose all the links in the genealogy could be made out from authentic documents, and be put in their proper order together, so as to make the chain, in its appearance, complete and entire, what proof have we that all the links are inherently valid and strong—that each one has been produced and put into its place with the requisite forms and ceremonies? The possibility and con-

\* The Hon. and Rev. A. P. Percival, in his "Apology for the Doctrine of Apostolical Succession," dedicated to the Archbishop of Canterbury, has given a table to show the episcopal descent of his grace "*in full*" for four successions, "By which," he says, "it will appear that, in transmitting the apostolical commission to the present Archbishop of Canterbury, there were in the first step four bishops concerned, in the second twelve, in the third twenty-seven, and in the fourth about fifty." He has also given a table which he designates "Episcopal Descent of the present Archbishop of Canterbury from Archbishop Warham, *traced in one line*." He has also given a table of "English Consecrations from Archbishop Cranmer, and his Consecrators inclusive." This table contains four hundred and thirty-nine names. But then it is added, "Here follow the names of some bishops which were omitted in their proper places, as I hoped to have found their consecration in the York Registry. I am sorry to say that the instances in which that hope has been realized have been few." So that, while he affords very valuable direction to those who wish to begin the work of tracing their descent, they must not rely on him, however willing he may be to



sequences of any defect on this point are thus put by Archbishop Whateley :—

“The sacramental virtue (for such it is that is implied, whether the term be used or not, in the principle I have been speaking of) dependant on the imposition of hands, with a due observance of apostolical usages by a bishop, himself duly consecrated, after having been in like manner baptized into the church and ordained deacon and priest—this sacramental virtue, if a single link of the chain be *faulty*, must, on the above principles, be utterly nullified ever after, in respect of all the links that hang on that one. For if a bishop has not been *duly* consecrated, or had not been previously rightly ordained, his ordinations are null;

serve them, as a fully competent and infallible guide: he may fail them at the very point which is necessary to the satisfactory commencement of their task. And then, if there are possibilities of failure in these three recent centuries, how much is there to sober the most sanguine, if not to appal the most resolute, in the retrospect of the fourteen or fifteen centuries which lie beyond!

Still, both the opponents and advocates of apostolical succession should feel indebted to Mr. Percival. The latter for opening to them the path which, whenever they begin the work of “tracing their descent from St. Peter or St. Paul,” it behoves them to take; the former for increasing their assurance that, should it ever please the whole body of the Anglican clergy to arise and enter in earnest on this undertaking, which, in the absence of their pleasure towards it, they declare to be so easy, they will have occupation enough to compel them to suspend their offensive warfare upon their less aspiring neighbours, and bewilderment enough to make them feel that they have become themselves the objects of true Christian commiseration.

and so are the ministrations of those ordained by him; and their ordination of others (supposing any of the persons ordained by him to attain to the episcopal office); and so on, without end. The poisonous taint of informality, if it once creep in undetected, will spread the infection of nullity to an indefinite and irremediable extent. And who can undertake to pronounce that, during that long period usually designated as the 'Dark Ages,' no such taint ever was introduced? Irregularities could not have been wholly excluded without a perpetual miracle; and that no such miraculous interference existed we have even historical proof. Amidst the numerous corruptions, of doctrine and of practice, and gross superstitions that crept in during those ages, we find recorded descriptions, not only of the profound ignorance and profligacy of life of many of the clergy, but also of the grossest irregularities in respect of discipline and form; we read of bishops consecrated when mere children—of men officiating who barely knew their letters—of prelates expelled, and others put in their places, by violence—of illiterate and profligate laymen, and habitual drunkards, admitted to holy orders—and, in short, of the prevalence of every kind of disorder, and reckless disregard of the decency which the apostle enjoins. It is inconceivable that any one, even moderately acquainted with history, can feel a certainty, or any approach to certainty, that, amidst all this confusion and corruption, every requisite form was, in every in-

stance, strictly adhered to by men—many of them openly profane and secular—unrestrained by public opinion, through the gross ignorance of the population among which they lived; and that no one not duly consecrated or ordained was admitted to sacred offices.” “The ultimate consequence must be, that any one who sincerely believes that his claim to the benefits of the gospel covenant depends on his own minister’s claim to the supposed sacramental virtue of true ordination, and this again on perfect apostolical succession, as above described, must be involved in proportion as he reads, and inquires, and reflects, and reasons on the subject in the most distressing doubts and perplexity.” Another sentence from the archbishop, though transposed from its original place, may be inserted here as a proper conclusion from the foregoing: “There is not a minister in all Christendom (on the assumed theory) who is able to trace up, with any approach to certainty, his own spiritual pedigree.”\*

We have seen what would be the toil of one who is at the bottom of the line in trying to trace his way upward. Let us pass over the line and see how, in its earlier, which ought also to be its clearer steps, it can be traced downwards. All the labour at the bottom, or through the middle, will be of no avail if we cannot find firm footing at the top. Since, in approaching the top, the links begin to diminish in their collateral lines until they consoli-

\* Kingdom of Christ, pp. 176—179.

date in one which an apostle's hand should hold, they ought here to be proportionably clearer and stronger—more manifest to the eye—more capable of enduring any test which can be applied by the hand.

So are they in the true genealogies of the Theocracy. The public records of each tribe go up to the twelve patriarchs. Before you reach them, the fathers descending from them are inscribed, together with themselves, on the imperishable pages of the holy Scriptures, which give us not the names only, but the biography of Jacob, Isaac, Abraham.

In the ecclesiastical genealogy, just at these points where you require most clearness, cohesion, strength—where, if one link be faulty, the whole theory which hangs upon it sinks into irrecoverable confusion and ruin,—and the more multiplied the branching lines of the chain, the longer the succession of its links and the more weighty the interests depending, the heavier the fall and the more complete the destruction,—just at these points the chain is known to be most defective; nor can the original and fatal defect ever be repaired. Records there are none. Dates of early episcopal ordination, and names of the paternity employed in ordination, there are none. Tradition, not history, reports that Peter became Bishop of Rome. Tradition, not history, reports the names merely, not the full pedigree of those said to have been his successors in office. But the most singular circumstance in the case, well known to all by whom it has been investigated, is this: that the sibyl of this oracular tradition, as though

compelled to make manifest the source of her inspiration by an insulting mockery of her deluded votaries, speaks to them with a double tongue. With the one she declares that Linus succeeded Peter; with the other she declares that Clement succeeded him. Some of the Fathers, with unsuspecting simplicity, listened to the one utterance, while others, with equal simplicity, listened to the other. The wisest of those who follow express themselves, as well they may, in great doubt as to which is true; and, since this doubt cannot by any possibility now be cleared up and settled, what is the consequence? Why, that this first link, which ought to be strongest of the whole, is cut into two by the very hands themselves which forged it, and neither half can hold upon it the weight of a feather.

There is another utterance of the Anglican oracle which deserves some attention; the more so, because it may seem to present an escape from the laborious, though the only satisfactory, method of tracing up the pedigree which we have just now exhibited. "Let him read the catalogues of bishops ascending up to the most remote period." The most remote period! What a convenient oracular phrase! We want the light which infallibly guides us into the presence of a definite and living object—an apostle. There is thrown around us the broad shadow of a venerable antiquity, in which the mind must be too reverent and subdued presumptuously to inquire for the person who is

wanted. We must be near the time of his apostolic existence ! It is a remote period ! and the proper feeling for that period is mysterious awe amid the objects dimly seen, and therefore the more likely to be those whose sacredness forbids a close approach and familiar intercourse !

And we are to be guided to the shadowy region of this remote period by the help of a catalogue !—a catalogue of bishops ! It may then be presumed that, if at any time it should please the Anglican bishops, priests, and deacons to trace their spiritual descent, this is the road which they purpose to take. It is direct, and, considering that it is to lead them to so remote a period, comparatively short. It is upward—still upward—cutting off all the perplexing angles of the triple paternity, and avoiding all the mazes of the labyrinth. But then the question is, Does the grace of ordination come down to them by this same direct road up which it may please them at some time to travel ? We submit that that grace, if it exist at all, must turn the angles and double all the mazes of the labyrinth, and that through that course only can they hope to find it.

The children of this world are wiser in their generation than are those who boast their possession of this apostolic light. They are in no danger of supposing that any one of them could establish a disputed claim to an estate by producing a catalogue of those who in succession had occupied it, or a claim to a title of nobility by a catalogue of

those who in succession had worn it, or a claim to an hereditary office by a catalogue of those who in succession had filled it. Catalogues have no such potency when they are referred to by lips not oracular. In ordinary cases, the care of the individual is to bring his proof to the precise point, whatever it may be, on which he founds his claim. That point, in the claims in question, is the validity of ordination. The proof essentially necessary to include that point, and establish the claim, is *the manifestation of the line of paternity in each successive ordination up to the apostles*. To say that certain individuals held the episcopal office in a certain see in unbroken succession, is to say that they held an accidental position and relation one to another in numerical order; it proves nothing, it says nothing about the ascending line of ordination. The theory of the succession requires proof as to when, where, and by whose co-operative functions the individual was made a bishop, and how those who ordained him derived their descent from an apostle. The catalogue, however perfect it may chance to be, shows you the time and place at which he happened to discharge the office of a bishop. So soon as you come, in the catalogue, to the name of an individual who was not ordained by the help of his predecessor to the see to which the catalogue belongs, the antecedent line is directly cut off from that which you had previously been tracing, and your journey must end there, short of your object, or you must make

up your mind to pursue it farther through the mazes of the labyrinth. Is there a see in these realms, or even in Christendom, which has not been filled again and again by translation, and whose line, as to ordination, has not in that mode been cut through and through into fragments of which it would be difficult to find the number, and sometimes to make out where the one ends and the other begins. And so we answer the oracle when it speaks to us of catalogues.

The analogies of the Jewish priesthood are the constant resort of the advocates of apostolical succession. There they profess to find their model. Thence they deduce their most captivating arguments. To functions corresponding with those discharged by that official body they make their boldest and broadest claim. They join together, not the prophets and apostles, which the Scriptures do, but the priests and apostles, which the Scriptures do not; and they profess to be the successors, either in office or lineage, of both.

Suppose for a moment we yield them the benefit of their claims, and then help in carrying out the analogies for which they contend. There is the twice-recorded and very conclusive case of the children of Habaiah, Koz, and Barzillai, who are put out of the priesthood, as polluted, because—born amid the troubles of the seventy years' captivity—they are not duly entered in the register of those who are reckoned by genealogy. Can the advocates of sacerdotal claims, by virtue of an eccle-



siastical genealogy, stand more firmly than they did, or must they, on their own principles, share with them in their fall? They, like men really in earnest on the question, carefully sought for their pedigree in the registers: these satisfy themselves with telling us that they could trace their descent *if they pleased!* They went to the public, authenticated, accessible records, which carried up the lineage to Jacob, Isaac, and Abraham: these tell us there are catalogues of names going up to the most remote period! They went to a line of parentage which was direct, and single, and easily traced: these, if they look for the paternity said to be in ordination, must seek it in the inextricable labyrinths of triple lines, so multiplying and diverging at every step of their course! They suffered from an omission in fastening the last link in the chain: these know not how many omissions may have taken place, and can prove no one link to be firm! They could supply the deficiency in the last link by tradition, uniform, clear, and near at hand: these cannot supply the deficiency in the first link which is formed from a tradition eighteen centuries old, opening its mouth with a double and contradictory utterance, and producing, in its multiplication, a Babel of confused and confusing tongues! They, as polluted, were put from the priesthood: and these, if they claim to be priests standing on the authority of a lineage, falling with them, must find, by a just retribution, in the pit they have dug for others, their own official grave!

We advance another step in exposing the fabulous nature of ecclesiastical genealogies by showing—

II. That they do not *impartially assign the honours* of apostolical paternity.

Fables originate in superstitious reverence for individuals. The hero of each one has become illustrious. The minds of those who look to him as their patron morbidly crave an addition to his honours—they exalt themselves, as his adherents, in proportion as they can exalt him whom they have chosen for their leader—they exaggerate his acknowledged importance and excellences—they supply what may be deficient in his history—their imagination, once employed in the work of invention, soon unfetters itself from the restraints of those ordinary laws which govern proportions and probabilities—and, if their hero has been associated with others, *he* is brought out into the illusive glare of artificial lights, while *they* are thrown back into the shadows of an unmerited obscurity. Look for the true position of the associates, and the equal light, shining around them as a body, opens to you not only the injustice and falseness, but also the inconsistencies of the fable.

The associated body here consists of the same number as composed the Fathers of the Jewish tribes—twelve patriarchs—twelve apostles. The land of Canaan was divided, and is still mapped out, according to the lot of each one of the tribes ;

so that the name of each patriarchal father was broadly and indelibly impressed upon the land, and is carried down, by its geographical divisions, to all generations. The care of recording and preserving their genealogies rooted itself in the habits and customs of all the tribes, so that, as long as any members of either of the tribes continued in their inheritance, or possessed any definite and authorised hope of restoration, the genealogies were sacredly retained, and continued, as the most precious link, still visible and entire, which bound them to the soil and the honours of their ancestry.

The twelve apostles were Jews familiar with the thoughts and feelings of their countrymen. The model of their genealogies was much more clear and perfect before their minds than it ever can become before ours. If then their grace and authority, as apostles, were to be conveyed down to all generations by a new ecclesiastical genealogy, we may surely assume that they would have adopted some adequate mode for making manifest their individual and collective lineage. Possessed of the prophetic inspiration which commanded all coming ages, they would have exercised their forethought about the interests of their progeny, and have provided against mistake and failure in the proper authentication of their respective claims. We should then have had the twelve ecclesiastical tribes, corresponding with the twelve Jewish tribes, with their lines of distinction regularly preserved and easily traceable. And, as

the Christian church is never, like the Jewish, to be abolished—as it is to be preserved through all ages, and at length to possess and include all nations, the line of descent from each one of the apostles would have remained indestructible; so that when the millennium of the church shall come, the place or lot of each one of the apostles might be manifest, and the claims of the progeny of each one indisputable. Thus the representatives of each one of the apostles remaining, and receiving their lot, the theory of apostolical succession would appear *as a theory* consistent and truth-like.

That we are not requiring too much, in requiring that the lineal representatives of each and all the apostles shall remain to give consistency to the theory of apostolical succession, is manifest from the fact that, when the Saviour speaks of them in their then existing relations to himself, or in their prospective relation to the future church, he unites them together: they are “the twelve” whom he has chosen and commissioned, and who are privileged with daily communion with himself. If one of them becomes a traitor, and goes to his own place, another is to take his vacant office, so that there may still be the “twelve apostles of the Lamb.” So are they connected together when the Saviour opens the future as well as when he speaks of the present. Does he give them the perspective of his own and of their future glory? it is glory which the twelve are to share in common. “And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That

which have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”\* Does he, after his ascension, give to one of their number a revelation of the heavenly Jerusalem? he still presents them as eternally and immutably united together—“And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.”†

Now, if in the formation of the church—if in its celestial administration and government—if in the foundations of its glorious habitation, the apostles are *all* found, *all* united and equal,—then, in the genealogical succession, if it be true and trustworthy—if it include a proper filial representation of fathers so equally illustrious, they all must have their place—they all must have their patriarchal dignity—there must not be one barren or unfruitful amongst them. Does the theory in question answer this first and most manifest requirement of a succession from the apostles? Does it really honour the men whose united inheritance it claims as its own? It professes to be a succession from the college of the apostles, but it contrives to divert all the honour and riches of the patrimony into the estate of the descendants by one line—that of St. Peter.

It is the succession from Peter only which is valued at Rome. The Anglican branch is but a

\* Matt. xix. 28.

† Rev. xxi. 14.

fragment severed from that parent stock. And though the Anglicans add St. Paul to St. Peter, and say that any bishop, priest, or deacon may trace up his descent to one *or* the other, this is only another case of oracular speaking with a double tongue. Parentage cannot thus be shifted, at convenience or pleasure, from one to another; and they who oscillate between two contemporaries singularly betray their own want of certainty as to either. The Anglican, standing upon the claims arising from the succession, must take the line of that succession as he finds it—as Rome gives it. The progeny of Paul, as distinct from that of Peter, are neither known nor desired there. The descendants by any other line, even if admitted to exist in its living representatives, are not acknowledged there: they are kept at a distance, as dishonoured kindred who have lost their *caste*, and with whom therefore no communion can be held. St. Peter is the fountain-head and patron of the whole legitimate and acknowledged succession; and the millennial church, as it exists in the hopes, the predictions, and the claims of Rome, is the church extended over the whole world acknowledging the supremacy of Peter in submission to the ruling Pope, and the succession from Peter, in the orders of the ministry, which the Romish church confers. The rod of St. Peter is now held to be, like that of Aaron—the only rod which blossoms and bears fruit. His rod is expected to be, like that of Moses, the rod which shall swallow up all the rest, and itself only remain

to rule the whole church—commensurate with the whole world.

The more fully the theory is expanded the more palpable do its inconsistencies become. It is *apostolical* succession. Then, as the apostles were twelve, on its own assumed principles there *might* be twelve lines of descent. The model, in the true Jewish genealogies, shows that there *ought* to be twelve lines of descent. The original relation of the apostles to each other in the formation of the church, together with their continued, permanent, and equal celestial association in the prophetic descriptions of the church, might lead us to conclude that, if they perpetuate themselves on earth by an ecclesiastical genealogy, there *must* be twelve lines of descent. The claims put forth by those who boast of their own succession show but one line of descent. They consequently reduce themselves to this dilemma: If the mode of succession which they advocate be the true mode in which the apostles convey grace and power, then they have usurped the inheritance of their brethren, and have ejected eleven out of the twelve apostles from their relation of paternity to the church; if it be not the true mode of succession, then they have invented and palmed upon the world “a fable.” In either case, they turn in vain for favour to the twelve apostles of the Lamb, still one fraternity in heaven, as they were fellow-labourers and one fraternity upon earth.

Restore the twelve apostles to their true and

scriptural position and relations, and then one ground of felicitation after another passes away from the successionists, with the exposure of the fable on which they rested. The antiquity, of which the theory boasts, is not sufficiently venerable either in time or in character: it does not go fully up to the fathers, who received from the Saviour's lips the command to go into all the world, but stops short at the gloomy chamber in Rome from which the oracle gives forth its double response. The associates to which it conducts are not, after all which is professed, "the glorious company of the apostles," but the fascinated companions of "the woman arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication." The place of fealty which it presents is not the true temple in which stand the twelve heavenly thrones of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, but the city in which they have fabricated the one earthly chair of St. Peter. The ecclesiastical architecture which it vaunts is, in truth, a nondescript order. It rises, not like a city built compactly together, and resting equally upon the twelve foundation stones, but is a glittering, gaudy pinnacle, propped up, by various devices, on one stone out of the twelve. So soon as the church touches her millennial state, the imposture will be universally discovered and reprobated—this fable of the Vatican will be classed and renounced with the older and equally respect-



able fables of the Pantheon—the pinnacle will fall, “like a millstone thrown into the sea, to be found no more for ever.”

We still further expose the fabulous nature of ecclesiastical genealogies by showing—

III. That they receive *no acknowledgment* from the apostles, on whose paternity they seek to affiliate themselves.

In illustrating this particular, we must still keep the model of the Jewish genealogies before us. Abraham was divinely educated for the place which he occupies at the root of that genealogy. As the children, through their successive generations, could trace their pedigree, by proper registries, up to him as their father, so he, by prophetic announcements, by promises, by an alteration in his name, by special providential dispensations, was made to understand that his character and position was to be pre-eminently paternal. When he looked, in the stillness of the night, and in devout contemplation, at the stars of heaven, their rays became prophetic of the future, threw their light down the line of his promised succession, and the music of their spheres to him was, “So shall thy seed be.” When he trod, with solitary step, the shore of the boundless sea, the very sand beneath his feet became vocal with the same sound, “So shall thy seed be.” Nature, in her most majestic orbs, and in her minutest atoms, was commissioned to call forth and nourish in his breast

the feelings of paternity. The voice of Deity, in its awe-inspiring utterances, addressed itself to the same feelings. The discipline of the supernatural events through which he passed was directed to strengthen, refine, and expand the operation of these feelings. Every glance he took of the land in which he sojourned—every forecast of its future history—every prophetic pondering of the destinies of the human race at large—was connected with the feelings, the relations, the results of his paternity. The land which he walked through, in its length and breadth, his posterity were to fill with their tribes, render illustrious by their deeds, and vocal with their praise. “I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee.” “In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.”

Now, here we have a divinely prepared paternity for a properly authenticated lineage. Abraham, beyond any other individual who ever lived in our world, enjoyed the development of the parental character. The future race lives before his prophetic eye, and are the children of promise. The feelings of paternity, as from the fulness of a fountain, flow out towards them. He looks forward, and dwells with complacence and devout gratitude on them. They, as they arise in successive generations, look back to him. They read his life. They receive the impression of his character. They enumerate and extol the blessings they receive from him. Every lip calls him, “Father Abraham.”

The whole nation unites its voice to say, "We have Abraham for our father." The relation is carried beyond the boundaries of earth and time. Lazarus, conveyed by angels, is taken to "Abraham's bosom;" and the rich man, lifting up his eyes in torment, still says, "Father Abraham."

Let us look now at the education of the apostles for the position which they are to occupy, and the work which they are to perform. The Lord himself from heaven becomes their instructor, and by the daily intercourse of three years prepares them for their future ministry. With heaven and earth at his command—with nature, in all the variety, beauty, and grace of its living scenery, for comparisons—with Scripture, in the full store of its examples and analogies—with the future church, in its whole history and requirements, present to his eye—if the apostles, like Abraham, are to be raised up to the position of fathers in the office they are called to discharge, the work will be accomplished with a felicity and completeness which shall leave every other model in the shade, and mark the operation of his hand who "in all things must have the pre-eminence." Come, then, to the instructions which they receive. A little child is placed in their midst, and, while their eyes are fixed on him, they are told that they must become, not fathers, but "little children." They observe the grave and pompous claims of the teachers of their day, and they are told that they must not allow themselves to be called "Rabbi, for one is their Master, and they

are brethren." They are unequal to the performance of all the work which, at this early period of their ministry, is required by Christ, and seventy others are to be associated with them. Here then is to be an increase of the ministry, and if the apostles are to be official fathers, here is the place to show the exercise of their functions, and the relation which the children are to sustain to them. But that relation which the Saviour constitutes between the apostles previously chosen, and the seventy now appointed, is not on the part of the twelve paternal, on the part of the seventy filial, but between the whole fraternal. Peter is there with his characteristic promptness for any work which the Saviour commands him to perform; but he is assigned no share in this first increase of the Christian ministry. The Lord himself appoints other seventy also. The record of the event is subsequently written down from apostolic lips by the pen of evangelists, and may be considered as a decisive proof that neither at the time, nor afterwards, did the idea of paternity, as belonging to them in the case, even occur to their minds.

We go onward to the inspired book of the "Acts of the Apostles." In its opening page, the pentecostal scene, we find a second increase of the Christian ministry recorded. The Saviour himself is no longer corporeally present; and there can be nothing here then either to preclude or eclipse the development of apostolic paternity. Still that paternity is not here developed. The Holy Spirit descends in

its visible and luminous symbol, the cloven tongue of fire, as well as in its internal illumination and miraculous endowments, on all who had come with one accord to one place. But he does not descend first on the twelve, and then, afterwards, on the rest, by the laying on of their hands, but at once, immediately, equally, originally on each one of the one hundred and twenty assembled: "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."\* Peter, instructed by a heavenly vision, and called by faithful messengers, goes to the house of Cornelius the Gentile. He is speaking to them of Christ, and not laying his hand upon them, when the Holy Ghost descends upon every hearer (and there were many come together) as it had done upon the one hundred and twenty in Jerusalem, "at the beginning," and they all "speak with tongues and magnify God."

Every individual who received the gift of tongues, and on whose head the symbol of a new and fervent eloquence, the cloven tongue, had rested, must have been divinely called and qualified for the exercise of some department of the Christian ministry. Those who were so distinguished, whether in the upper room at Jerusalem or in the house of Cornelius, received their ministry, not from Peter, who was present on both occasions, nor from any of the

\* Acts ii. 3, 4.

apostles, who were all present on the first occasion, but from the Lord himself, in the bestowment of his Spirit.

It is worthy also of remark that Peter vindicated himself against an accusation brought out of the latter of these cases, not by asserting a paternity or supremacy, which others have since attributed to him, and amplified sufficiently to cover every case, but by declaring the originality and equality of the heavenly communication to these Gentiles to have corresponded with the first bestowment on the brethren of the circumcision themselves. “Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?”\*

In what position do his own words show him to have stood? Not in that of a father looking, like Abraham, at the children of promise, but in that of a witness wondering at his past contractedness, sinking into self-abasement before God, and gratefully admiring and recording the grace which, altogether independently of his hand—which, beyond and contrary to any supposition which he could have previously formed, had been actually bestowed.

At the period when Christianity was a new and unwritten religion, it was necessary that every individual filling any department of its ministry should

\* Acts xi. 16, 17.

be endowed with supernatural gifts. In the state of society then prevailing, when females were secluded from promiscuous, and even from a recognised position in religious, assemblies, if their equality of privilege with the other sex, under the new dispensation, was in any way to be made manifest, there must be a department of the ministry which could reach them in their seclusion, and make known to them, without hinderance and without reproach, that in Christ Jesus there was neither male nor female, but that both were alike and one in him. The provision therefore of a female ministry was included in the pentecostal bestowment. Here is another point in the case at which Peter is seen. He does not lay his hands on the mother of Jesus and the women who formed a part of the one hundred and twenty to convey any authority to them, but he becomes the expositor of the grace which they, equally with the men, had now received from above. "This," said Peter, "is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your *daughters* shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants and on my *handmaidens* I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy."\*

In both the cases we have been contemplating, Peter performed the part of a good steward of the

\* Acts ii, 16—18.

mysteries of God. He used the keys which the Saviour had committed to him. He opened the kingdom of heaven to his brethren of the circumcision on the day of Pentecost. He repeated the same service afterwards to the Gentiles, when he had himself been taught that he should call no man common or unclean. In neither case can we find any trace of either function or claim which implies an official paternity.

The quotations we have made from the Acts have brought us into communion with Peter while he discharges his most important apostolic functions, at or near the time when he was fully endowed for his official work. In his own epistles we can renew our communion with him when he is just about to put off the "tabernacle" of his flesh. If the feelings of an official paternity have ever been produced in his breast, now is the time when, hoary with years and labours, we may expect to find them in their fullest development. He does address himself to the ministers of the church, so that he offers the very opportunity which is wanted to manifest his spirit on the point in question, at the time most favourable for those who call him father. They look imploringly towards him for parental recognition in vain. As though he had possessed some prophetic foresight of the use which would afterwards be made of his name, and some settled caution to abstain from every syllable which might be employed in imputing an official paternity, his words are studiously fraternal: "The



elders which are among you I exhort, who am also *an elder*.”\*

If Peter refuses to acknowledge them, will Paul help them? They have no right to anything which they can extract from his words, for they rob him, as well as all the rest of the apostles, to make up the tribute which they pay exclusively to Peter. The robbery which they here commit takes us to the foundation of the fable it has been our object to expose. Paul, unlike Peter in this respect, does employ parental phraseology. He calls Timothy his “own son in the faith,” and his “dearly beloved son,” and Titus his “own son after the common faith.”

Now, every individual possessed of generous feelings, who has long cherished a devout attachment to any system, and who beholds a youthful disciple giving his mind and energies to its support, will find, in his own heart, a key to the interpretation of these endearing appellations. They are the utterances of a kind nature, called forth by the admiration and love of youthful excellence and great promise, not of the far-seeing mind, intent on founding an illustrious official order. The point to which the eye fondly looks, and on which the heart pours out its love, is the faith professed, and not the office discharged. In the case of Titus, it is declared to be “the common faith.” In the case of Timothy, in another place, a line of succession in the faith is traced, which is not apostolical

and paternal, but unofficial, feminine, and domestic : “When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice ; and I am persuaded that in thee also.”\*

And, then, it must be remembered that Paul was accustomed to employ the same phraseology in cases in which it is obvious that no office could be contemplated. When sending Onesimus back to Philemon, he calls him, “My son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds.” In writing to the Corinthians, he tells them, “I write not these things to shame you ; but as my beloved sons I warn you. For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers : for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.” Still, further, let it be remembered that when Paul does associate Timothy with himself *officially*, it is the fraternal, and not the paternal bond which he throws around : “Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our *brother*,” is, again and again, the greeting with which his epistles commence.

We have cleared up these lesser points that we might leave nothing behind us in the general subject, and that we might be the better prepared to look at that which now presents itself—the *workmanship* of the theory of apostolical succession. The words descriptive of paternity, irrespective of the ideas which he himself attaches to

them, since they are not supplied by Peter, are taken from Paul. The models of episcopacy, without proving that they ever sustained the episcopal office, are taken from Timothy and Titus. These two *evangelists*, not bishops, are joined to Paul, that they may receive, and have power to convey down in endless lines of succession, the grace of apostolic ordination. Yet the succession through Timothy or Titus does not prove indestructible and endless. The lines through these model cases have failed and terminated—how, or where, or why, cannot be told. The failure of these lines is, however, no cause of lamentation to the workmen employed in constructing the succession. They wanted from Paul, through Timothy and Titus, not a lineage, but a theory, which should have some appearance of scriptural sanction and authority. Peter himself is present at the appointment of the seventy; but, if in any way they received the grace of apostolic ordination, no lineage has been preserved through them. He was present also, and shared in the bestowments of the Spirit on the one hundred and twenty; but the lineage of one hundred and nineteen, out of the one hundred and twenty, has either become degenerate and dishonoured or has altogether failed, and is lost. Peter was also a witness of the bestowment of the Spirit on the many who had come together in the house of Cornelius—indeed he employed the key which unlocked to them the treasure they received; but there is no lineage remaining through any one

of them. In all his labours at Jerusalem, Samaria, and in the cities of Judea, at Antioch, and throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, how many elders must have been converted by his ministry and appointed to their office by his hand! but there is no progeny descending from him through any of these innumerable lines. Tradition says, he came at length to Rome. *Here then is the grand conjunction out of which the lineage is made to spring.* So long as Peter himself journeys and labours in cities and regions, through which he is traced by inspired penmen, he is as unproductive of a lasting lineage as are any other of the apostles; but so soon as he can be withdrawn from the clear light of inspired history into the deepening shadows of tradition—so soon as he can be brought within the circle of the spells of the Roman sorceress,—then a lineage can quickly be found for him. If Peter came to Rome, he must of necessity have ruled there as its bishop. If he ruled as bishop, he must have had a successor in his office—Clement or Linus, one or the other. Whatever hands ordained the doubtful successor of Peter, that successor must have conveyed the grace of apostolic ordination which Peter *could* have conferred upon him. And thus the difficulties of the earlier period being all surmounted, the line of succession is now developed which must continue through all ages, and be extended at length through all regions. The case of the workmen, put briefly, is this: They have wrested Paul to get from him the materials

for a fable; they have palmed upon Peter the offspring of the Roman sorceress, to make him the father of a race which shall enjoy the benefit of that fable—to make him the root of a new ecclesiastical genealogy. With what energy, were these apostles now living, would they unite their voices to say to universal Christendom, “Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies!”

Let us not, however, because ecclesiastical genealogies are fabulous, treat the question of genealogy with contempt, or even with indifference. The question has a twofold relation to our Lord himself, most interesting and important.

1. The genealogy of his human descent is sacredly preserved, unbroken and complete, to authenticate him as the Son of David, who holds, according to prophetic announcements, an everlasting throne, and administers the affairs of an ever-widening empire—as the seed of Abraham, who inherits and fulfils all the promises—as the second Adam, who is constituted the federal head of a regenerated family, all of whose members partake of the merit of his perfect obedience, stand secure by virtue of his unfailing integrity, and rise in succession to possess the celestial paradise into which, as their forerunner, he has entered. His genealogy is secured and published to the world, and then the tables and registries are scattered or burnt; so that no individual of our race can now, or ever will be able to, compete with him in the honours of a perfect genealogy—no accredited Messiah can now

come to the people who have rejected him, and have lost the power of tracing through authentic tables any other, and we are shut up to him, as the only child of promise, “the hope of Israel,” “the desire of all nations.”

2. As the second Adam he becomes the root of a new and spiritual genealogy—the Everlasting Father of a seed, the travail of his soul, who shall be numerous as the drops of dew from the womb of the morning, and with whom he will at length present himself before the eternal throne, saying, “Behold I! and the children thou hast given me.” All advantages enjoyed by those who could trace their genealogy up to the first Adam are more than supplied to us when we are united by faith to him who ever liveth—the last Adam. All relations which it would be to our advantage to retain or make find in him their centre and their living bond. All excellences which we could desire to imitate shine forth from him in brightest development and combination. All honours which could descend upon us are collected by him as our inheritance. All love which parents of a thousand generations could combine and accumulate towards us flows from the fulness of his heart in the plenteousness and constancy of the perennial fountain. His name to us is above every name, and our names to him are so dear that he writes them in the book of his genealogy, “the book of life.”

How different that book from any earthly register! Could the first Adam, our common father, come to us with the record of all the names in our

ancestry between us and himself, what would be the first and deepest impression of our minds, as we looked through the long succession of the names? It would be this: It is the register of death—the book of death. Our fathers where are they? All—all among the dead. But in the Lamb's book there is no death. The entry of each name is the entry of one quickened to newness of life, and looking with the eye of faith to Christ. They who believe in him “never die.” Faith brightens into sight; Hope rises to full fruition; Love is fanned into an unquenchable and seraphic flame; Praise advances from feeble, broken, interrupted accents, into the full-toned melody of an everlasting song. The progress marked in that book is not from the cradle to the grave, but from life incipient to life more abundant. The point of transition in that book is not shaded with the gloom of the cypress, but radiant with the glowing hues of celestial splendour—is not marked with the solemn notes of the funereal dirge, but with the cheerful welcome-chorus of heavenly minstrels. Every name written is the name of one who is living, either in the spiritual or heavenly Jerusalem, and written by him “of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.” The whole book is the book of life. As we think of it, and dwell upon it, how earnestly should the aspirations of our spirits rise to him!

“When he reveals that book of life,  
 Oh may I read my name  
 Amongst the chosen of his love—  
 The followers of the Lamb.”

And now, some important questions arise from the subject. Are these fables to take the place hitherto occupied in our country by the true sayings of God? Are these endless genealogies of the dark and musty chambers of tradition to be substituted for the rich treasures laid up in the treasure-house of holy Scriptures? Are the semi-Jewish, semi-papist priest, and mystic sacramental rites to be obtruded upon us instead of the minister of Gospel truth publishing the glad tidings of Gospel grace? Is antichrist to assail us in a form more subtle than he has hitherto assumed, and to mix another cup of deadly poison for the public mind more skilfully disguised and medicated for prevailing tastes? Is the light of the Reformation to be arrested in its course—to be sobered down into a dim religious gloom in which all kinds of fantastic and illusive figures can be made to pass before the wondering eye? or is it to advance to its meridian, encompassing us on every hand with the light of the Sun of Righteousness, and bringing the living realities of earth and heaven to our view?

These are questions which it behoves us, with all earnestness of mind, to answer to our consciences, our country, and our God. We do yet possess a free Bible—the word of God is not bound. We do yet possess a free pulpit, the testifying or warning voice of which can be lifted up like a trumpet. We do yet possess a free press, by which truth, like single leaves or rooting branches of the tree of life, can be scattered or planted for the healing



of the nation. We do yet possess a free social state, in which we can unite and combine for any and for every purpose which a Christian mind could desire to see accomplished. We do yet possess a free soil through which the valleys are exalted, and the mountains and hills laid low, and across which, in every direction, we can pass and repass as on the wings of the wind, affording facilities for combination, either in separate districts or for the entire country, such as were never enjoyed by any people before. The world also, in every part of its boundless field, is opening to us. Lowering clouds and wintry storms may indeed gather over some points in the horizon ; but every part of the soil beneath is preparing for the seed which we carry in our hands, and from which only the full harvest of freedom, peace, unity, fraternal intercourse, and millennial praise can grow. Never since apostolic times, when the incorruptible seed was scattered by handful on the tops of the mountains—the most prominent eminences of the earth, did such solemn responsibilities rest upon any men as now rest upon us. Let us not complain if, succeeding to apostolic work, we have to take our share in it on what may be called apostolic conditions—suspicion, reproach, misrepresentation, opposition, the frowns of the mighty, the bitter hatred of the priestly pharisee, the scorning of the proud and of those who are at ease. Let us be the more concerned in all things to approve ourselves as the ministers of God, “by the armour

of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report : as deceivers, and yet true ; as unknown, and yet well-known ; as dying, and, behold, we live.” Let us be true to our principles, as were our noble nonconforming forefathers, who suffered for them the loss of all things, and then shall we share with them in the glories of their immortal reward.

## LECTURE II.

THE FABULOUS NATURE OF PETER'S SUPREMACY LAID OPEN, BY  
COMPARING IT WITH THE PERSONAL PRIESTHOOD OF AARON;  
OR, THE USES AND ABUSES OF AARON'S CALL AND SERVICE.

“The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.”—1 *Peter* v. 1—4.

THIS is an exhortation delivered by Peter to those who were discharging the functions of the Christian ministry—the true pastors of the flock in whose fellowship he could delight to be associated, whose work he could contemplate with complacent mind, and with whom, were they faithful unto death, he could hope to enjoy the commendation and rewards which the Saviour at his coming will bestow. It is beautifully simple and fraternal—a well spring of feeling, of wisdom, of that power of love which, entering the heart, where it most readily opens a channel, fills it through that

channel, and then bears it onward in the desired course.

Is the course prescribed in this exhortation to the ministers of the church that which is taken by those who profess to honour Peter in fixing on him their official affiliation? Is their spirit in harmony with his, and ruled in filial obedience by his words? He modestly withdraws from the view the insignia of the apostolic office which he was fully entitled to wear. They have emblazoned his office with titles and dignities which the Saviour, who appointed it, never did confer. He contemplates the ministers of the church as one order, "the elders," with whom he connects himself by the fraternal bond. They have broken and thrown away that bond that scope may be given to their ambition in rising one above another, through seven orders which they have made—the higher orders also admitting of different degrees. He takes the place and work of a "witness of the sufferings of Christ." They claim the power, by consecrating elements of bread and wine, to reproduce the body and blood of the suffering Saviour, and to convey the merits of the sacrifice to the people. He partakes of the glory which faith beholds, shining forth from the Lord in his heavenly exaltation, and which, at length, is to be openly revealed. They prefer the light of the fire which they have themselves enkindled on earth, around the chair at Rome in which they say that Peter once sat, and so they encom-

pass themselves with its sparks. He calls the silver and gold of this world's circulation, whatever image and superscription it may bear, "filthy lucre." They have made the bosom of the church the general reservoir into which the streams of this filthy lucre might be drained from every part of the world; and since Peter's voice evermore uttered in their ears the unwelcome sounds, "Silver and gold have I none," they hit upon the device of making him the special patron of the *pence*. He enjoins the cultivation of the moral power of a holy example. They claim the patent of an official authority which is to convey sacramental grace irrespective of character. He directs to the residence of the chief Shepherd on Mount Zion which is above—the heavenly Jerusalem, and exhorts to anticipate and prepare for the period when that Shepherd, now invisible, shall appear. They tell us that there is a chief Shepherd still on earth—now at Rome—a visible Head of the Church—a holy Pontiff or High Priest—a vicar of Christ—a centre of unity and authority. What is more wonderful still—yet, on their showing, most surely to be believed, on pain of exclusion from the fold—they tell us that Peter himself, when he wrote these words of exhortation, was that chief Shepherd—that visible Head—that holy Pontiff—that prime Ruler—that he transmitted these offices, with their functions, to a long line of successors, who have since enjoyed them, to Gregory the Sixteenth, who now possesses them—and that he has

entailed them on a lineage which can never fail till time itself shall end. This—a part—the crowning part of that fable of ecclesiastical genealogy which in the former Lecture we discussed—we now propose to examine.

The most recent and widely-circulated exposition of this article of the Romish creed presented to the eye of the British public is from the pen of Richard Waldo Sibthorp, B.D., in his “Answer to the Enquiry, Why are you become a Catholic?” It is here presented in the form in which it had proved most seductive to his own mind, and in which, it was presumed, it could be made least offensive to the objecting or enquiring mind of an English protestant. Whatever changes may have subsequently modified either his views or his position, in relation to the Romish church and her doctrines in other points, it may be presumed, until he publicly retracts what he has so publicly proclaimed, that he is still under the spell of the fascination which he here describes, and in which, whether successfully or otherwise, he has tried to include his readers. He says:—

“I found the former,”—that is, the Jewish church,—“to be a compact, united body, really and visibly united in all its parts; combining a number of provincial and locally separate portions in one religious nation or people; combining them in a most strict, perfect, and evident unity of faith, of worship, of laws, of discipline, of religious ordinances, and even of minute ceremonies: no variety

permitted—no departure from the oneness demanded being sanctioned in any individual. Such was the ancient Israel; and, if typical of the church, such should be the Israel of God under the New Testament. At the head of this body, nation, or church, was one supreme dignitary, of priestly order, invested by God with singular prerogatives, ruling in perpetual succession over Israel, until the Lord should come: in his person, offices, and residence, a centre of unity to the whole nation, far and near—a representative on earth of the Divine High Priest in heaven.”

Peter is, in the usual manner, and with the commonly-quoted authorities for the position he is to take as Aaron's antitype, then introduced to us.

“There is in the New Testament a remarkable promise given to one of the twelve apostles,\* which we must view in connection with an extraordinary exhortation afterwards addressed to him,† and a very peculiar position held by him;‡ all of which also, from the very striking accordance with the Jewish type which they give the Christian church, warrant the inference that the Lord, in his kingdom, his body, his family, his household, acts on the same principle and plan on which he has acted in nature, and guided man to act in ordinary arrangements of this life. It is not correct that what is allowed to have been once appropriated to St. Peter was afterwards made common to all the

\* St. Matt. xvi. 16—19.

† St. John xxi. 15—17.

‡ Acts ii. 3, 4, 10, 12.

apostles. No other apostle shared his office in the formation of the church."

Peter being thus installed in his high office, his successors follow in the usual course.

"The Saviour gave no intimation of the time of his absence, but left his church in constant expectation of his return. What he left her, he expected to find her, so constituted and so united, whether he delayed his coming for twenty or two thousand years. Had this event occurred during St. Peter's life-time, no farther development of a primacy and centre of unity in the church had taken place—no successor of the apostle had been needed. But as it was otherwise, when he died to whom the special promise and charge had been given, another took his position, to occupy it, and continue the church in her divinely arranged and existing constitution, if haply the Lord should come in his days. And thus another and another have successively filled the chair of St. Peter for eighteen hundred years on the same warrant, with the same design, and the same darkness as to the Lord's time of return: that warrant, Christ's words to St. Peter; that design, the good rule and unity of his church and kingdom; that darkness, the purpose of God,\* herein accomplishing *the type of the continuous high-priesthood of the Jews.*"

Aaron, in his high-priesthood, is then the object on which our eye is to be fixed. Let him appear. We cannot be too familiar with him. We have

\* Acts i. 7.



found Abraham worth the knowing, in his pater-nity, although he did not help the new genealogy. We shall find Aaron worth the knowing, in his divinely-appointed priesthood, although, perhaps, he may not help the supremacy. Truth is beautiful, heavenly, commanding, whenever seen in the place which God has assigned her to fill. Error, usurping that place, may look bold, and speak confidently in her absence. But lead her back, and confront her with the usurper. At her look, error is abashed and confounded. At her voice, it is silenced and departs. Peter, in the place assigned him by the Lord, and which he himself deemed it abounding honour to fill, is one of the most striking and powerful embodiments of truth which the eye can be privileged to contemplate. But Peter, in the place assigned him by the Roman sorceress, called up, like Samuel by the Witch of Endor, from the dead, clothed with Aaron's worn-out vestments, and furnished with a censer taken from the spoils of Titus, is a ghostly form of error, which must dissolve and vanish from the view so soon as Aaron himself comes back before us, fragrant with the oil of his recent consecration, and in the freshness of the glory and beauty of his holy garments.

The theory of Peter's supremacy, as we have seen in the extracts quoted from Mr. Sibthorp, and as it is commonly presented by its advocates, is grounded on an assumed analogy between Peter and Aaron. Peter and his successors are assumed

to sustain the same relation to the Christian church which Aaron and his descendants, according to the law of primogeniture, did to the Jewish church. The latter is said to have been typical of the former. The accordance between the two is said to be very striking. Here then is the gist of the question. Let us lay it open. Aaron has three things which cannot be denied to him, which will not be disputed: A divine *call* to the specific office which he is to fill—a *history* of his discharge and transmission of that office—a fixed and appropriate *place* of service. Let us give him our devout attention—

I. In the Divine *call* to the specific office which he is to fill.

It will be remembered that Aaron was the elder brother of Moses the inspired lawgiver of the Jewish church. He was also associated with Moses in the commission to demand from Pharaoh the emancipation of the tribes from their bondage. He commonly carried and, at the command of his brother, stretched out the rod—the symbol of Divine power, at whose employment such miracles of punitive justice were performed. When the people had all passed under the cloud and through the sea, by which they were separated for ever from the Egyptians and baptized into Moses as their inspired instructor and ruler, there was given to Moses, in the Mount, the whole pattern of the service of God which was to be established and perpetuated

throughout all their generations. The separation of the tribe of Levi to the work of the sanctuary, and of Aaron and his sons to the office of the priesthood, forms a special part of the instructions given to Moses on which the arrangements and continuance of the service are made essentially to depend. The ritual, divinely inspired, and minutely describing every ceremony to be performed, is written—published to the people—carefully studied by those who are to discharge the offices which it prescribes. The tabernacle, in its several parts, is constructed according to the pattern given in the Mount. The vessels and vestments are prepared. The solemn day of consecration is, at length, announced. To give increased interest and importance to the event, it is to take place on the commencing day of the new year—the second year of the exodus from Egypt: on the first day of the first month of this year is the tabernacle to be set up, and Aaron and his sons consecrated for the service they are to perform in it. Not merely the family whose members are to enter on the holy offices, but also the whole people for whom these offices are to be performed, are prepared for the day, and full of eager anticipation while they wait for its arrival: they are all to be witnesses of the consecration of their high priest, as well as participants in the blessings which are to flow from his work.

With what thoughts and emotions must the day have been anticipated by Aaron himself! A new

office is to be created which he is first to fill, and then to entail on his posterity. The family priesthood of the patriarchs is to pass away, that it may be succeeded by a priesthood for the nation, to which his name is to be given, and its origin to date from the day of his consecration. The tabernacle now constructing is then to be put under his care, and become, from that time, the place of his service. The most costly spoils taken from the Egyptian, dedicated by willing hands, and wrought by skill exceeding human power to impart, are to furnish the vestments he is to wear—the vessels he is to use—the insignia of the office he is to discharge. His feet only are to enter into the holy place of the sanctuary, when, by the Levites, it has been set up. His eyes only are reverently to behold the mercy-seat, when the glory of the Shechinah shines upon it. His hands only are to carry and sprinkle the blood of the annual atonement made for the whole people. On him, as he receives the warm life-blood in the golden vessel and turns to draw aside the vail, every eye is to be fixed. For him, returning with the message of peace and words of blessing, the whole multitude is to look and wait. He meditates on the solemn responsibility of the work of mediation which he is to perform between the people and God. A painful sense of the infirmities by which he is encompassed leads him to ask, “Is there nothing above and beyond this work which I am to perform? no blood more precious? no service more perfect? no priest more dear to

God, more powerful for man? Some rays of light from ancient promises shoot athwart the gloom—point onward to a future day when another change shall take place, and the national priesthood, now superseding the family priesthood, shall itself be superseded by a priesthood for the world. His heart, swelling with mingled emotions, “fears and is enlarged.”

The day arrives. The call is indisputable. The consecration is to be in the face of all the people. The scene is to have breathed into it the life of inspiration—the power of immortality, that it may stand out in bold relief before the eyes of all generations. Here it is for our ears to hear the voice which called him to his office, and for our eyes to see him set apart to its discharge.

“And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments, and the anointing oil, and a bullock for the sin offering, and two rams, and a basket of unleavened bread; and gather thou all the congregation together unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Moses did as the Lord commanded him; and the assembly was gathered together unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Moses said unto the congregation, This is the thing which the Lord commanded to be done. And Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water. And he put upon him the coat, and girded him with the girdle, and clothed him with the robe, and put the ephod upon

him, and he girded him with the curious girdle of the ephod, and bound it unto him therewith. And he put the breastplate upon him: also he put in the breastplate the Urim and the Thummim. And he put the mitre upon his head; also upon the mitre, even upon his forefront, did he put the golden plate, the holy crown; as the Lord commanded Moses. And Moses took the anointing oil, and anointed the tabernacle and all that was therein, and sanctified them. And he sprinkled thereof upon the altar seven times, and anointed the altar and all his vessels, both the laver and his foot, to sanctify them. And he poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head, and anointed him, to sanctify him."\*

Still, however clear and indisputable the call of Aaron to the priesthood, and however prominent and imposing the position he occupies in the scene before us, there is one thing which, for reasons that will afterwards appear, should be carefully marked and remembered, which is, that Moses the lawgiver was the person employed in consecrating Aaron to his office, and also in all the associated rites connected with the dedication of the sanctuary. The inspired author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, when he reviewed the scene, thus describes the part which Moses took: "For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and

\* Lev. viii. 1—12.

hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry.”\* “Thus did Moses: according to all that the Lord commanded him, so did he. So Moses finished the work. Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.”† By this manifestation of Divine glory was the broad and luminous seal of God’s approbation stamped upon the solemnities of this illustrious day; and Aaron, in the plenitude of his heavenly vocation and authority, lives before us the high priest of the Jewish people—the patriarchal father of all who, in legitimate succession, are entitled to sustain and carry onward the sacred office.

And now a very important declaration connected with Aaron’s vocation to this office, and made by the apostle when writing to the Hebrews, claims our most earnest attention: “And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee. As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to

\* Heb. ix. 19—21.

† Exod. xl. 16, 33, 34.

save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; *called of God* an high priest after the order of Melchizedec.” \*

The Saviour, by his priesthood, superseded the national priesthood of the Jews, as Aaron, who was at the root of that priesthood, had superseded the family priesthood of the patriarchs. As the High Priest of our profession, “he entered not into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.” † He not only transferred the place of service to Mount Zion which is above—the heavenly Jerusalem, but, breaking down the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles, made his own priesthood the common attraction and bond of union for every nation, and people, and kindred, and tongue, while his work, including, as it does, all perfection, is to be followed by no other—is itself to be perpetual and final.

Yet Christ took not the honour of the priesthood upon himself—glorified not himself to be made High Priest. His call to the office was typified in that of Aaron, the earthly shadows of whose work he embodies in heavenly and enduring substance—was foretold in the words quoted by the

\* Heb. v. 4—10.

† Heb. ix. 24.



apostle from David—was made visible to human eyes and audible to human ears in the descent of the Spirit upon him at his baptism, and the voice from the Most Excellent Glory, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”—was conveyed to himself in the power which sustained him while he was offering his own most precious blood in the great sacrificial atonement for the world’s guilt, and which quickened his uncorrupted human flesh as it lay entombed in the sepulchre—was made manifest to principalities and powers in heavenly places by his reception, as he returned to his Father, with the wounds of his passion and the insignia of his priesthood in their freshness and beauty upon him—was unfolded to the one hundred and twenty assembled in the upper room at Jerusalem by the illuminating power of the Spirit which they received on the pentecostal day—was published to the world by the miraculous tongues with which they were endowed, and by the undying life of inspiration given to their pens. So Christ sustains the office of the priesthood, “called of God, as was Aaron.”

But, if there is no question as to Christ’s call to be the High Priest of our profession, there is a question as to Peter’s call to this office—there is a question as to the call of any, and of every, man who claims to be *officially* a priest on earth. Can he show, in his own case, or in the case of those from whom he professes to have derived his office, *a call to the priesthood like that of Aaron?* He may

assume oracular solemnity and importance while he speaks of “unauthorised teachers,” and of “intruders into the ministry”—he may repeat with endless reiteration the passage he has learned from others to quote, but has never himself taken the pains to understand, “No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron”—he may mutter, in connection with the passage, the names of “Korah, Dathan, and Abiram”—he may almost expect that, some day or other, the words of his divination will take effect, and the ground open and swallow us up, or the fire fall from heaven upon us to consume us; but the curse, causeless, will not come. We can read the text in the sacred epistle—we can hear it repeated from the lips which employ it to anathematize us without any alarm for ourselves, or the slightest disturbance of our tranquillity, just for this reason—that we have learned to distinguish things which differ. We can see how the Christian ministry may be exercised, and how it ought to be exercised, in all the functions which belong to it, without any assumption of the name or the work of the priest. We repudiate the name as a title of our office. We should tremblingly shrink from discharging the functions which belong to the office. We have no sacrifice to offer for others—no incense to burn—no sacerdotal rites to perform. We, in our ministry, proclaim, exalt, commend, rely ourselves on the perfect, sole, and everlasting work of our one Great High Priest in heaven. It is enough, as to

the priesthood, for us to know that "he was called of God, as was Aaron"—that he is fully competent to the whole work which the priesthood involves—and that he neither needs nor admits any other to participate with him in its functions.

It is for those who claim to be priests, either in chief or in common, by virtue of their professed relation to Peter, to show, either in their own case or in his, a call to the office like that of Aaron. Until they do this we are entitled to conclude that they are the parties who take the honour upon themselves—who glorify themselves by becoming priests. They, intruding without authority into the office which belongs exclusively to the Son of God, might read in a new light the history of "Korah, Dathan, and Abiram." We leave them upon the ground they have chosen. They need not be so careful to fence themselves off from us; we are afraid of coming nigh to them. We think that a single spark of true light—of heavenly fire, kindling in their favourite text, must, sooner or later, explode a mine beneath their feet, which opening will swallow up, at once and entirely, every vestige of their official pretensions derived from the functions of the priesthood. "No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron."

We must first show that Peter himself had no call to be high priest which can compare with that of Aaron—that he, in the entireness of his apostolic office, stands far aloof from Aaron and his descend-

ants—that neither before nor after his call was he found in the company of the priests.

Peter before his call was a fisherman; and, in his call, the analogy of the work he is required to perform is declared to be, not in the offices of the priesthood which are discharged at the temple in Jerusalem, but in the labours of his original vocation on the lake of Galilee: “I will make you fishers of men.” The eye of the Master, looking onward to the work of his apostles, saw in it labour and toil, hunger and thirst, cold and nakedness. The eye which first saw Peter arrayed, like Aaron, “in holy garments for glory and for beauty,” with golden vessels in his hand, and the mitre, with its holy crown, upon his head, must have had some marvellous assistance from his device, who can show all the glory of the world in an instant of time.

The original call given to Peter and his brethren, though uttered by the Saviour in the brief words, “Follow me,” was, for the time and purpose then present, just as clear and satisfactory as was the more imposing call which, of old, had been given to Aaron. It was because the *office* of the apostles was to differ so essentially from the *office* of the priests, that the circumstances of their call, and training for their work, were also made so essentially to differ. Aaron was the chief minister of a religion, one leading principle of which was *concentration*; all its official rites were to be performed at one place, to which all the people were, at stated

seasons, to come. Peter and his brethren in the apostolate were to be the ministers of a religion, a leading principle of which was to be *diffusion*—diffusion into all the world; and hence the very name given to the twelve—apostles—those sent. Aaron was the chief minister of a religion which was *typical and prophetic*—foreshowing in shadows things which were to come. Peter and his brethren were to be the ministers of a religion which was to be *historical*—founded in the facts of the Saviour's history, which presented the truthful embodiment of the preceding types and predictions; and which facts the apostles were chosen, as witnesses, to behold and report. Aaron was the chief minister of a religion whose leading promises assured *earthly prosperity to an obedient people*; and therefore visible splendour was thrown around the office which he filled—costly vestments and implements of service were employed in its discharge—and a settled revenue, arising from the promised fertility of the soil, was apportioned to the sacred tribe instead of a share in the land. Peter and his brethren were to be the ministers of a religion whose leading promises were to assure *spiritual blessings*—which was to open heaven to the view, and which was to present self-denial both in the precepts and example of Him who had not where to lay his head. Aaron was the chief minister of a religion which was constituted *pictorial*, that it might strike the eye of a people rude in knowledge, and meet the requirements of an early state of society, and a church in

its non-age. Peter and his brethren were to be the ministers of a religion which was to be *intellectual*, that it might feed the higher faculties of man's nature, and meet the requirements of a church no longer under bondage to the elements of this world, but brought out into the liberty of truth which, first uttered in divine simplicity by a Saviour's lips, whose vesture was the seamless coat, and who carried no vessel of service in his hand, was to adapt itself to all forms of society, and be to the end of the world in advance of whatever cultivation might be obtained by the human mind. Aaron filled an office whose authority and splendour were *external*—confined to the one place of its service. Peter and his brethren were to fill an office whose authority and power were to be *internal*—carried within them in the endowments of the Holy Spirit, who made their bodies his temple, and who accompanied the testimony of their lips with signs and wonders in every place. In obeying the Saviour's command, "Follow me," they became eye-witnesses of the events of his history—of the facts on which the great doctrines of Christianity are founded. They heard, and the promised Spirit afterwards brought fully to their remembrance, the discourses which he delivered. They beheld the spotless purity of his life, and shared in the privations which he endured. They saw the miracles which he performed. They were clothed by him with power to work miracles themselves; and were promised that even greater works than his own

they should be enabled to do, when he should have returned to his Father. His work with the Father, which they were not prepared to understand while he was with them, he opened by his Spirit to their minds on the day of Pentecost. He enabled them, by the gift of tongues, to publish *his whole gospel*, now completely revealed to them, to all the nations of mankind, and to leave it, in their writings, a legacy to all generations. And thus the great High Priest in heaven, in the accomplishment of his perfect work, and as connected with a religion which is to call into exercise and growth man's nobler faculties, given to him for converse with the unseen and eternal, is made the centre of attraction and unity to all minds and hearts enlightened and renewed—to the universal church. Oh, what mists of darkness and illusions of error—what obscurity and perverseness of vision must have confused and distempered the minds which have confounded and commingled these offices of priest and apostle, so broadly and palpably different in their origin, their design, their functions, their history, and their results!

But it may be said, If there was no allusion to the temple, nor the priesthood, in the original call given to Peter and his brethren in the apostolate, yet the subsequent communications, specially addressed to Peter, supplied and completed the deficiency of the primary and more general call.

Let us then examine the two passages which are commonly adduced to supply this deficiency. Let

us see whether, having first been called that he might be trained for the apostolate, he was afterwards called to be a high priest, as was Aaron.

The first passage adduced is Matt. xvi. 15—19. “He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

Now, that we may shorten the discussion here, we will grant the two things for which the Romanists contend in the exposition of this passage. We will grant that when the Saviour uttered these words he pointed to Peter, and meant by the rock on which the church was to be built the office and work of Peter—not the confession which Peter made as to his own divinity. We will grant that the keys were given to Peter alone, and that thereby he obtained, at one point, pre-eminence among his brethren. Yet, granting both these demands, we are just as far off from any call to the priesthood, like that which Aaron received, as we were



before. Suppose we were even to go further, and grant that a figurative declaration is fully equivalent to a plain, literal, and legally specific call and appointment to office; still, neither the rock, nor the key is a symbol of the Levitical office. If the former express more of stability than the liquid element into which the fisherman casts his net, and the latter more of dignity than is usually seen on the girdle of the fisherman's coat, neither the one nor the other associates itself with any part of Aaron's vestments, nor with any function of Aaron's office. If Peter were the rock which the Saviour intended, he must take his place with his brethren in the apostolate, and with the holy prophets (not with the priests) where Paul declares them to be, "Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." Place the keys at his girdle, or in his hand, or let them even be so weighty as to require to be borne on his shoulders, and you associate him, not with the family of Aaron, who received no key, and wanted no key, to draw aside the vail within which their most solemn work was to be performed, but with Eliakim, the steward of the house of David, to which, while Aaron's family ministered, no priesthood belonged. A steward of the mysteries of God, to open a treasure-house or admit to privileges, may require a key; a priest, mediating before God, and becoming in his work a centre of attraction and unity, requires it not.

If no priesthood can be found in the first and principal passage adduced on this question, to be carried from it to the second, certainly, that second passage can suggest no priesthood from itself. It is beautifully pastoral, not Levitical. It contemplates the feeding, not the sacrifice, of the flock. It conveys to the fallen and humbled apostle a restoration to the functions of his original office, not an enlargement of the powers of that office. Thrice had the self-confident apostle denied his Master. Thrice is the question connected with his former avowal of warmer love than his brethren felt put by the Saviour to him, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?" Thrice is the pastoral injunction, corresponding with Peter's own exhortation in our text to the elders of the church, delivered by the Lord to himself, "Feed my sheep," or "Feed my lambs." The Shepherd tending the flock, not the priest, with the sacrificial knife, selecting the victim, nor with the vessel containing its blood, is the symbol here employed. No call, like that of Aaron, to the priesthood is here.

If Peter cannot be joined to the priesthood, then no other earthly minister of Christianity can. If he had no call, like that of Aaron, then none who profess to derive their office and succession from him can show one. If he cannot be made to stand, in Aaron's vestments, at their head, we may safely challenge the whole body of the Successionists to come forth into the field, and meet them there with

all their claims. Let them gather in full force, both from Oxford and from Rome. Let them come in all their orders and degrees. Let the humbler orders display the purity of their white linen vestments, and the superior orders lift on high their mitred heads, and boast of all their titles. Let them be fragrant with the odour of the oil of their consecration, and perfumed with incense from their burning censers. Let them be illumined with the splendour of their golden candlesticks, and furnished with all their costly vessels of a worldly service. Let them avouch their traditions, and emblazon their genealogies. Let them repeat their wonder-working words, and elevate before adoring multitudes their host. Let them encompass their altars, and chant their litanies. Let the living Pontiff himself marshal their ranks, and combine into one united and obedient body the whole power and glory of the priesthood. We meet the combined phalanx with this one declaration of the written word, against which no force and no enchantments can ultimately prevail, "No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." Let this text become one of the watchwords of a scriptural protestantism. Let it be inscribed upon a banner to be unfurled in defence of the truth. Let it be grasped and employed as the sword of the Spirit—*it is* the word of God.

Let it now be remembered that, if Aaron was the high priest, Moses was the Jewish lawgiver,

and then it will be seen that, in the insatiable ambition of the Romanists to gather all honours round the earthly chair of St. Peter, they have overlooked, or misrepresented, the actual relation to the Jewish church which Aaron did occupy. He was not that supreme ruler in the Jewish church which they assume him to have been, and on which false assumption they ground their argument for the supremacy of Peter. Aaron did not originate, nor could he alter, a single ceremony in the ritual services which he and his sons, from generation to generation, were to administer. The whole pattern of their services was given by God to Moses, and was written by him in the inspired records. They who officiated administered the prescribed ceremonials first, as we have seen, under the superintendence of Moses, who, it should be remembered, outlived Aaron; afterwards, when on the death of Moses the pure principles of the Theocracy were in operation, under the superintendence of God himself answering them from the holy oracle by Urim and Thummim; and subsequently, when the Theocracy was modified, by the appointment at the desire of the people of a king, under the superintendence of the ruler who was denominated, "The Lord's anointed."

Here is the most extraordinary feature of the supremacy claimed by the successors of St. Peter—that having fixed their eyes on the honours which encompassed Aaron's office, and being desirous of finding in those honours a type of what they coveted

for themselves, they then exalted themselves into the seat of Moses to legislate and prescribe; and finding no pattern from the Mount to direct them, and having no call to ascend and receive one, they usurped the throne of God himself—they made the pattern—they decreed the ceremonies—they created the offices—they invested themselves with the dignities; and thus that wicked one “was revealed, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.”

Let our attention be given to Aaron—

II. In the *history* of the discharge and transmission of the office to which he had been called.

The personal history of Aaron, from the period of his public consecration by Moses, is the history of his high priesthood. In the discharge of the functions of that office he is presented impressively to our view; and he invariably comes before us a single individual, exclusive and alone in his work. That individuality is made more prominent and decisive by the terrible results of a conspiracy, which was once entered into, for the purpose of invading and destroying it. “Korah, Dathan, and Abiram” feel themselves aggrieved by it, and suppose themselves defrauded of their rights. They spread the infection of their own morbid and rebellious spirit among the leaders and the mass of the people, and then, thinking themselves strong enough

to demand and, if required, to compel an alteration in the nature of the office, they make their accusation against Moses and Aaron, and prefer their own claims. The case is put to the issue of Divine adjudication, and the judgment is one of the most memorable in history. The three leaders of the rebellion, with their families, tabernacles, and goods are swallowed up—"they and all that appertained to them went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation." "The two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown," who have intruded themselves uncalled into the office of the priesthood, approach with their flaming censers before the Lord; "and there came out a fire from the Lord, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense." Of the people, on whose numbers and strength the leaders of the rebellion relied for success, seventeen thousand four hundred die in the plague: its farther progress is stopped by the individual work of Aaron, who now, in their distress, the object of their desire and reverence, takes his own censer, and stands in the midst of the congregation making an atonement for the people; "and as he stood between the dead and the living the plague was stayed."

To confirm the individuality and exclusiveness of Aaron's work, in the office of high priest, by another miracle, the evidence of which could be perpetuated in the object itself on which the mira-

cle was to be performed, the rods of twelve rulers or princes of the tribes, each rod having written upon it the name of a tribe, and the rod of Levi having written upon it the name of Aaron, are laid up before the Lord. "And it came to pass that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness; and, behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds." In this state, with its buds and blossoms unwithering, and its fruit undecaying, it is kept before the testimony for a standing token of Aaron's exclusive call to the work of the high priest—an interesting symbol of an individual and unassociated office.

We shall not have a due impression of the interest which gathered round Aaron, in the discharge of his office, unless we remember and combine several facts which belong to his history,—that he was fourscore and four years old when the whole congregation was assembled to witness his consecration,—that, by a remarkable, if not a supernatural, dispensation of providence towards him, as in the case of Moses, there was the vigour of youth associated with the hoary locks, the silvery beard, the venerable appearance and accompaniments of age,—that he thus continued for nine and thirty years the first, and hitherto the only, high priest of their divinely-modelled tabernacle, having had in his office no ancestor, and, during all these years, no appointed successor,—that, as he was the elder brother of Moses, and the generation which had

come out of Egypt had wasted away in the wilderness, he became, at length, the oldest man among all the tribes—the well-known and universally acknowledged patriarch in age of the whole congregation.

Thus concentrating on himself so many points of circumstantial interest do the people behold him, year after year, as he alone, on the solemn day of expiation, officiates for them. They bring him two kids of the goats for a sin-offering. They witness his work as he casts lots upon them, and takes the blood of one of them that he may carry it within the vail, and sprinkle it upon and before the mercy-seat. They hear the confession which he makes of “all their iniquities, and all their transgressions, in all their sins,” while his hands are laid upon the head of the live goat, on which he puts their sins that they may be borne away. They wait for him until, having made an “atone-ment for the sanctuary, and the tabernacle, and the altar, and the priests, and all the congregation,” he comes forth from the presence of propitiated Deity, and, with uplifted hands, pronounces on them the blessings of the covenant: “The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.” How must these words have thrilled through the breasts of the assembled multitudes as, in the silence and expectation of subdued and penitential feeling, they turned their eyes



towards the priest, who, having gone to God as their representative, with their names collectively on his breast-plate, and the blood of expiation in his hand, came back now, as the ambassador from God to them, to utter authoritatively with his lips the message of peace and covenanted blessing.

It may be fairly inferred that, in discharging the duties of his office, Aaron's eye did not become dim, nor his natural strength diminish, nor his voice, in pronouncing the blessing, become weak and tremulous; for, at length, he is called to lay down his office and his life together. He does this, however, not on the bed of languishing, attended by the gentle ministrations of female hands, which usually apply the alleviations of man's final sufferings, and smooth his dying pillow, but, after a toilsome ascent to one of the rugged summits of Mount Hor, with Moses and Eleazar at his side. His years have been prolonged, and his strength sustained, only that he might live for his office, and leave the stamp of a patriarchal impress on it to be carried downwards with his name. His death, in some respects the most singular on record, is to glorify his office, by connecting the peculiarity of its circumstances with the history of the transmission of his priesthood.

The scene, as recorded by the pen of Moses, yields to no other for solemnity and tenderness in the wonderful history of the Exodus: "And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in mount Hor, by the coast of the land of Edom, saying, Aaron shall

be gathered unto his people: for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel, because ye rebelled against my word at the water of Meribah. Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up unto mount Hor: and strip Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son: and Aaron shall be gathered unto his people, and shall die there. And Moses did as the Lord commanded: and they went up into mount Hor, in the sight of all the congregation. And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son; and Aaron died there in the top of the mount: and Moses and Eleazar came down from the mount. And when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, they mourned for Aaron thirty days, even all the congregation of Israel.”\*

The facts that Aaron went up into the Mount in his holy garments, and in the sight of all the people, sufficiently indicate that the last day of his life was a day of solemn assembly and service. It is the deep and settled conviction of his own mind, of the mind of Moses his brother, of Eleazar and Ithamar his sons, of all his children's children around him at their several stations and appointments in the tabernacle, of all the congregation assembled, that his hands take the vessels of service for the last time. Sustained by Divine power, and cheered by some manifest tokens of Divine favour, he calmly, firmly, yet how feelingly, performs each successive part of

\* Num. xx. 23—29.

the appointed ritual; and now his lips are to close the service by pronouncing the appointed blessing. The venerable priest, sustaining the weight of a hundred and twenty-three years of natural life, and encompassed with the hallowed associations of nine and thirty years of official life, is now, face to face, with the people. He is to see them, in the flesh, no more. They are to see him no more. It is a moment of most intense and thrilling interest. Such a moment never has, and never can again occur to them. Aaron pours into the words of benediction the fulness of the feelings struggling in his breast. To the people they are his last words. No other can he—no other need he utter. They are bound by them as with a spell, and continue in the lowly attitude in which they listened to them, while Aaron, supported on either hand by Moses and Eleazar, passes through their midst. His back is at length towards them, and they turn, still speechless, to mark his every step as he advances to the Mount, and climbs its lower slopes. They still watch him as he emerges, at intervals, more and more dimly seen, from the tortuous defiles of its upper paths. The summit is reached, and, like the Mount on which the Saviour was transfigured, is secluded from the common gaze. There is a cleft in the rock which a stone may cover, and it is to be Aaron's grave. In sight, and by the side, of that open grave the holy vestments are taken, one by one, from Aaron's person, and are then put, one by one, on the person of Eleazar his

son. Aaron beholds another in his office. His work is done. His only act of obedience remaining is to die. Eleazar, arrayed in official vestments, however deep the filial and reverential emotions in his breast, must not defile himself in touching the dead. He need not. Moses need not. Aaron's own last pilgrim step can take him into his resting-place. He enters. He lies down to die. There is one last loving look into the countenances of his brother and his son, as on either hand they bend weeping over his sepulchral bed—one lifting of the hand, in token of peace and benediction, and then it falls composed like its fellow hand—the eyelids gently close, and the light of life has departed from the placid countenance and the extended frame. There are solemn moments given by Moses and Eleazar silently to admire the beauties of such a death, both in its moral features, and in the celestial hues still beaming from the face; and then they reverently roll the stone which is to cover the mouth of the grave, as though careful, in the quietness of their work, not to disturb its peaceful slumbers. The sepulchre is made safe, and they return.

The people have not scattered to their tents. They wait the issue of this departure of a living man, a living priest, their venerable patriarch, to find and enter his own grave. They look as eagerly to descry two figures on the descending paths of the mountain as they had before looked to see three go up. They are seen. From point to point they

are traced downwards. At each renewed appearance their forms—at length, their features—become more obvious and distinctive to the view. One of them is clothed as Aaron was; but it is not the same wrinkled forehead which they had been accustomed to see sustaining the mitre with its crown—it is not the same beard of snowy whiteness which had hitherto waved upon the edges of the breast-plate which contained their names. Aaron then is dead. Their patriarch is gone, but their priest remains. Eleazar comes to them in the same vestments, with the same insignia, which Aaron wore when he went from them. The person is changed—the office continues the same. It is transmitted in the solemn hour of his most wonderful departure from the father to the son. The son is to be in the office what the father was. It is transferred, if not with the same rites, yet with the same authority by which it had originally been conferred. One was originally called alone to receive it—one, in its transmission, is alone called to sustain it. The transmission is as obvious as the original call, and is marked by circumstances which have no parallel in the history of mankind.

The lesson of the scene is this: the people may not see a dead priest—much less a shrivelled or mouldering relic. If the men who fill the office cannot continue, by reason of death, the office itself is perpetual and undying. It continues from Aaron through his descendants until Christ offers his one perfect sacrifice; and then the vail of the earthly

temple is rent in twain, and the office, with all its functions complete and unchangeable, is transferred to the heavenly Jerusalem, and embodied in His work who dieth no more, but “is able to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

And now, with this true model before us of an office which was individual and supreme in its discharge and transmission, we are to look for Peter’s history, that we may see whether, in these particulars, we can find an antitype to Aaron.

At the very first step we find eleven others associated with Peter, and he is one of “the twelve.” So are they designated in the gospels, and, as we showed in our last lecture, so are they continued in their celestial relation to the church—the twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb—the twelve thrones and the twelve apostles judging the twelve tribes. Peter is not the first disciple among the twelve, for he is brought to Jesus by Andrew his brother—nor the nearest among them in relationship to Christ, for James is “the Lord’s brother”—nor the one admitted to most confidential intercourse with Christ, for John is “that disciple whom Jesus loved,” and who was permitted to lean on his bosom at the last supper. He obtains one distinction, they obtain other distinctions. These distinctions are interesting to contemplate, as marking varieties among the most illustrious band of men the world ever contained, equal in the essential

functions of their office which they hold in common; but they are powerless and fatuous in proof that either of them enjoyed supremacy over the others.

They are *men* "subject to like passions as we are," and there arise contentions among themselves "which of them shall be greatest;" but these contentions are strictly among themselves. Had the Lord settled this question, by appointing to either of them the supremacy, the strivings would have had another and a more guilty character—they would then have been strivings against his authority and appointment—they would then have been a repetition of the sin of "Korah, Dathan, and Abiram." It is a relief, in looking at that side of the character of the apostles which is shaded by infirmities, to see that the Lord's word was at all times felt to be a law to them which they were not to dispute but obey. Raise Peter to the supremacy, and you disqualify the rest for the discharge of their office, by involving them in rebellion against the Lord.

The mother of Zebedee's children asks that her two sons may sit, the one on the right hand, and the other on the left, not of Peter, which would have been the case had he been declared, like Aaron, supreme, but of the Lord himself—they knew of no supremacy besides his. Where is Peter on this occasion? He is one of "the ten" who are moved with indignation against "the two brethren." The *ten* are moved with indignation—then, as equals in office, they are equally aggrieved by the aspirings of James and John. Had the idea of a supremacy

in Peter ever entered into their minds, and had they thought of obtaining distinction by being next on either hand to him, he might perhaps have been more lenient to their fault. The Lord himself settles the dispute, and, to all who, like the twelve, take his word as law, settles for ever the question we are discussing, by declaring that there should be no lordship nor dominion among them.

One of the twelve becomes the traitor. His office another must take. Matthias is elected by the eleven, before they have received the promised illumination and guidance of the holy Spirit, and understand the Lord's design in the case. The Lord himself calls Saul the persecutor. He, though born out of due time, becomes a witness for the Lord by having seen him, and by receiving from him, in special revelation, all the knowledge which to the others had been communicated in more ordinary intercourse. His right to the apostolic office being ungenerously disputed, he is constrained to vindicate that right. The Saviour's own relation to him of every thing necessary to be known for the discharge of the office is one principal ground of his argument and proof. That revelation, as it was supplementary, must have been complete to the apostolic office. Every question relating to the office must have stood in its proper position and entireness before the eye of the apostle of the Gentiles. That that revelation contained in it no word of Peter's supremacy is obvious from the declaration of Paul, twice repeated to give it



greater weight, "In nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles."

The words imply that, in the light of the revelation which he had received from heaven, as well as in the light of the works of an apostle which he had himself been enabled to perform on earth, he had looked on each one of the apostles individually, and on the whole of them collectively. Nothing had been revealed to him from heaven, nothing had been seen by him on earth, which he did not find included in his own functions, and embodied in his work. He had on one of his visits to Jerusalem seen James, Cephas, and John there, who in the work they were then performing seemed to him to be "pillars" jointly sustaining the weight of the affairs of that church which was the first, in time, of all churches. He does not depreciate their importance to exalt his own. He admits that they are pillars. Yet he stands by their side. He measures himself by them. He carries away in his mind their full dimensions; and when driven, against his inclination, to vindicate himself, remembering those dimensions, he says, "In nothing was I behind the chiefest of the apostles."

He measures himself by three eminent among twelve, and thus may be considered as intimating not only that neither of the three exercised, or professed to exercise, any supremacy over himself, but also that neither of the three professed to exercise supremacy over the others. Peter was one of that three. Had he claimed supremacy over the others,

with him alone would Paul have been led to measure himself, and his vindication would have been, "I am in nothing behind even Peter." But he classifies them together, and Peter is not even put where we might, on some grounds, have expected to have found him—the first of the three—at the head of the class of the eminent ones. It is James, Cephas, and John, not Cephas, James, and John, which, so classified, live arranged before Paul's mental eye: as though it were intended to manifest with prophetic clearness that, when the question of Peter's supremacy should hereafter arise, there should be no shadow of a support from it on the page of inspiration, or in the fruitful field in which the apostles together laboured; but that its whole origin, and growth, and upas branches might be exclusively seen rising with rank luxuriousness from the teeming hot bed of Romish ambition.

"Actions speak louder than words," and they are not wanting in the case. At Antioch, the apostle, for whom supremacy of rule over his brethren in office is claimed, seriously—not to say, as there was dissimulation in the case, *dishonourably*—compromises the authority of an essential law of Christianity, fearing the less enlightened brethren of the circumcision. He too, who is extolled as having been the divinely-appointed centre of unity, withdrew, and separated himself from the healthy part of the church, thus lending himself to a faction, and becoming the patron of a temporary schism. The apostle of the Gentiles withstood him

to the face. The ground did not open, nor even tremble, beneath him when he was so employed. The heavens did not gather blackness, nor send forth from the secret place of thunder the forked lightnings to consume him. No lips uttered to his ear the names of "Korah, Dathan, and Abiram." But Peter was humbled and subdued; Peter submitted to the law as it was expounded by Paul. In this case Paul, in the presence of Peter, and without supposing that he was in any way invading Peter's province, or assuming any functions which belonged exclusively to him, became the restorer and, to the church at Antioch, the *centre* of unity and peace; while on Peter's broad escutcheon a second blot was fixed which no time can ever erase, since the pen of inspiration has written concerning it, "he was to be blamed."

We have seen, in the case of Aaron, a special providential dispensation harmonizing with his official distinction, and giving peculiar interest and impressiveness to his work. His life is prolonged until he becomes the patriarch of the whole nation. His memory stretches farthest back into the history of their bondage, and is most fully stored with the details of their sufferings. He can just remember his mother's making the little ark of bulrushes, and he saw his infant brother laid in it. He groaned with the people under their burdens while Moses was being nurtured in the court of Pharaoh. He is the individual most fully entitled to address himself in paternal language to successive genera-

tions in the camp, and who, when the dignity of age is referred to, rises spontaneously before the mind as its most venerable type and exemplar. There is a striking correspondence in these particulars between Aaron and one of the apostles; but that apostle is not Peter.

“What shall this man do?” said Peter, on a memorable occasion, as he pointed to that disciple whom Jesus loved. Jesus saith to Peter, “If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die.” How long did that supposition continue, “John will not die?” Circumstances, at length, seemed rather to favour than discountenance the opinion. The rest of the apostles, one after another, finish their course. John alone remains of their whole number. As time rolls onward, he becomes to the Christian church, in respect of age, what Aaron had been to the Jewish church—the patriarch. His memory is stored with all the facts of the Christian history from its commencement. His personal history is identified with its most sacred events and memorials. He had been with his Lord in the splendour of the mount of transfiguration, and in the gloom of the agony of Gethsemane. He had leaned upon his bosom at the paschal supper, and had received from his tremulous lips, when hanging on the cross, the tender charge to be a son to Mary his weeping mother. Her history, from that time, had been intertwined

with his own ; for, from that day, he had taken her to his own home. He had taken his full share in the journeys and sufferings of the apostles, and, if he had not laboured more abundantly than they all, yet he had laboured during a longer period than they all. His venerable hands were still employed in the bestowment of apostolic gifts, and round his hoary locks the words mysterious still seemed to spread a prophetic halo, "If he tarry till I come."

How is it, since for a number of years John was the sole survivor of the apostles, and all that was peculiar to the apostolic office must have survived in him, that the supremacy was never claimed for him? How is it, since he became in age the acknowledged patriarch of Christianity, that the succession has not been derived from him? There is an easy answer to these questions. There was no tradition which could connect his latter days with Rome; and therefore, though the materials of his case and history are far better adapted for the workmen who have constructed the supremacy and the succession than are the materials which they have found in the case and the history of Peter, and though they might have been much more cleverly joined and dovetailed with the worship of the Virgin, they have been compelled to leave him out of their work. Having thus happily escaped their sacrilegious hands, John, the beloved disciple, stands before us in the true glory of his own apostolic purity and simplicity.

But there is this difficulty connected with their

omission: they cannot cancel the pages of his history; they cannot blot out the records of his later years—the products of his closing labours. These remain; they form a part of the holy oracles contemporaneous with their double-tongued tradition: the life and apostolic acts of John against their uncertain and contradictory names of Linus and Clement. If either Linus or Clement were the successor of Peter in supremacy, then he must have become, by virtue of his office, superior to John; a man, of the generation following the apostles, greater than an apostle himself; greater than John, the most beloved and venerable of all the apostles; greater than John even when the Saviour was granting to him visions of heavenly glory—was sending by him epistles to the seven churches in Asia—was completing by him the canon of inspiration—was pouring through him the light of prophetic symbols which were to illustrate the whole future history of the church and the world. Linus or Clement—one or the other, they cannot tell which—greater than John: two *ignes fatui*, dancing by turns before the eye on the banks of the Tiber, yet set up as the one light of the world, the centre of unity; and that at the very time when all the glory of the apostolate is gathered into one luminary, from whose ample orb the softened evening radiance is streaming over the face of nature, while on every eminence the prophetic watch-fires are enkindling in its beams, which, after it shall have descended below the horizon, are to burn and illumine through all generations.

Let our attention be given to Aaron—

III. In his fixed and appropriate *place of service*.

That place of service when Aaron was consecrated was the tabernacle which, wherever the tribes encamped, was set up in the centre of their tents. Three tribes took their appointed station on the East, three on the West, three on the North, and three on the South, while the tabernacle was in the midst. So it continued during all the years of Aaron's service. When, afterwards, the tribes were led into the land of promise, some one place was fixed on for the more permanent settlement of the tabernacle with its service, as Shiloh; and at length the city of Zion was chosen, and the declaration published, "Here will I dwell for ever, for I have desired it." The temple is reared there, and is filled with the glory of the Divine presence. Here the priests, the descendants of Aaron, are to officiate; and on this spot all the splendour of their religion is to be concentrated: thus making it a type of Mount Zion above—the heavenly Jerusalem—"the general assembly and church of the first-born written in heaven."

That our illustration may be more simple and definite, we go back to Aaron himself, and his nine and thirty years of service in the centre of the camp. If it were intended that he should be a visible head to the Jewish church, and a centre of unity to the whole of its members, that of course would be the proper place for him to occupy.

There could be no uncertainty as to where, at the appointed times of service, he was to be found. There could be no difficulty in obtaining a sight of his person, and of such parts of the ritual as were assigned to him publicly to discharge. There can be no doubt but that his person, and the official vestments which he wore, were as familiar to the minds of the people as is the person, with his attire, of any living minister of religion to the members of his own congregation. The mind of the entire nation, young and old, received the one clear and definite impression of Aaron's venerable person, arrayed in his garments of beauty and splendour, as the most interesting and sacred object with which the eye could become conversant. As the place of the tabernacle was fixed and central, well known and accessible from every part of the camp, so all the services which Aaron performed, and which belonged to it, were equally fixed and central, well known as seen by the public eye, or, when he went within the vail where the eye could not follow him, understood and vividly conceived by the public mind; which, operating according to a well-known law of our nature, would work most actively on those parts of his engagements which were intentionally secluded from the view, and enshrined in awful and mysterious sanctity and glory. He was as closely identified with the tabernacle, and as essential a part of its scenery, as were the "sculptured cherubim and portrayed angels." They, invisible in the holy place, were fixed and immoveable, yet



always in the attitude of adoration, and readiness, with outstretched wing, for more extensive service. He, in costly robes, and symbolic insignia, and resplendent breast-plate, which made his whole figure intentionally unique, inimitably and surpassingly glorious, was the living moving minister of the sanctuary; sometimes in the face of the people receiving from them the appointed offerings; sometimes at the altar with the golden vessel into which the blood of the victim was streaming; sometimes with the golden censer from which the fragrant cloud of incense was ascending; sometimes within the veil, the people's sole representative before the glory of the *Shekinah*, yet having every movement determined by time and season, according to the prescribed ritual, his very steps pondered and measured, and even his reverential obeisance before the mercy-seat intimated to the multitudes without by the sound of the bells which encompassed the hem of the sacred ephod.

Where in these particulars are we to look for an accordance between Aaron and Peter? What was Peter's place of service? Where was he fixed as the centre of unity? We read of his being at Jerusalem, at Samaria, at Lydda, at Joppa, at Cesarea, at Antioch. We conclude from one of his own epistles that he travelled through Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. And this is just what was proper for him to do as one of the twelve apostles, whose mission was to all the nations of the earth; but certainly what he should

not have done if he were appointed supreme ruler of the Christian church, its visible head, and centre of unity. A centre of unity perpetually shifting its place, and perambulating the world! A visible head of the whole church, when only the residents of one little province at a time could tell where he was to be found! A supreme ruler without a capitol, or court, or officer, or certain dwelling-place! A successor to Aaron without sanctuary, or vestments, or vessels of service! The extolled patron of those who forbid to marry, leading about a sister—a wife!

But they say he came at length to Rome. And does it not become obvious that it was for Rome, and not for Peter, that the supremacy was wanted and was coveted? By cunning and fraud one piece after another of the materials from which it has been constructed was there acquired, and tenaciously held until the whole could be carefully put together. From Peter it derives only a name. But then it was thought that, if the shadow of that name could be brought to “overshadow” the ancient city, it might infuse new life into the withering limbs of decaying power; and it has been employed to renovate, in an embodied form, the inextinguishable lust of dominion which seems to be inherent in the place. That lust of dominion has been the genius of Rome from the beginning of its history. There has been seen the incarnation, the growth, the maturity of every kind of baleful power which has afflicted and cursed our fallen

humanity. What a subject is bound up in that one word Rome! We return to its imperious claim to supremacy of rule in the Christian church, with a view more especially to expose the gentle and insinuating plea by which it is urged—a visible head—a centre of unity.

A visible head! We have seen that Aaron, whether the term be properly applied to him or not, was visible. Every member of the church, attending the services at which he officiated, could see him—could renew the sight at each returning period when he discharged the public duties prescribed to him. We have seen that Peter was not thus visible to all the Christian church—that, as his work was itinerating, he could not be thus visible to more than a very small number of its members at a time. The great mass of the church would always be in ignorance as to where he actually was; and what multitudes of Christians, contemporary with him, would never have an opportunity of seeing him at all!

But Rome is a fixed and settled place; and, though the successors of St. Peter have not always chosen it as their permanent residence, yet perhaps the residents at Avignon went occasionally to Rome. But did they become visible to all the faithful by going thither? Is it, as was the tabernacle in the camp, the centre in which all lines met? Or is it even, as was Jerusalem in Canaan, the mountain of the Lord to which all the principal lines of intercourse conducted, and where, three

times a year, all the members of the church could repair?

Let it be remembered that Christianity is not yet located in the whole of its promised possession, nor will be until "all the ends of the world shall remember, and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him." Is there such a peculiarity in the position of Rome upon the map of the world as might indicate its selection, by a prophetic foresight, to be a centre of influence in such a state of the church? Do the highways of human intercourse increasing, multiplying, thronging with the activities of mankind, verge towards Rome, and point out a future and more brilliant destiny than it has ever yet enjoyed? Under any conceivable circumstances in the progress of society could any one man be made visible as a head to all other men? Is not the very term "visible head," as it is unknown to Scripture, also a misnomer and a fallacy?

But there is another view to be taken of the case. Those who amuse and deceive themselves by this fallacy—this empty shadow of a visible head—are in danger of overlooking the spiritual realities which may be found in true scriptural instruction. Give the people the "word of God;" enforce on them the Saviour's exhortation, "Search the Scriptures;" like good stewards, bring out before them the treasures, new and old, which they contain, and Aaron himself, in his vestments and services, will become more visible to them than the existing

Gregory either is, or can be made, to the great mass of these who ignorantly call him their visible head. How properly are the Scriptures designated the "lively oracles!" In them Moses and Aaron, the patriarchs and kings, the prophets and apostles live, and move, and open to us the vital elements of their being. The house of bondage—the wilderness—the land flowing with milk and honey—the tabernacle—the temple—the city of festive solemnities—these fix themselves in our imaginations, and furnish our minds with living scenery. It is the, so called, "visible head" which is unseen—unknown—without power to convey itself as an element of life into the human breast. This personification of error "is dead while it liveth;" it lies entombed in the sepulchre of its former glory. Rome itself is that sepulchre—a city of the dead—garnished without, but, within, full of rottenness and dead men's bones!

A centre of unity! If by this be meant the authority of wisdom and love dwelling in one individual in such plenitude as to enable him to sway all judgments and attract and unite all hearts,—omitting for the present the objection, already taken, that Peter could not have access to the whole church for these purposes at any one time,—a more unhappy selection could not have been made for the work assigned. The noble and generous qualities which Peter did possess were shaded by strongly-marked infirmities—infirmities of the very kind which would repel and divide rather

than conciliate and attract. His Jewish prejudices were so strong that, until the vision of the sheet let down from heaven, he could not see how any Gentiles were to be brought into the Christian fold without previously becoming proselytes to Moses; and, even after his own judgment had been informed, we have seen that he had nearly produced a schism in the church at Antioch by separating himself from the Gentiles, "fearing them who were of the circumcision."

Perhaps, however, we ought to inquire what those, who boast of Peter and his successors becoming and continuing "a centre of unity" to the church, mean by unity? Here is a recent and captivating exposition of their views, entitled to our careful consideration :—

"From the Dan to Beersheba of that land, which was this ancient church's appointed heritage, there was not an Israelite that lived not in fealty and submission to the supremacy of the one high priest; or that might lawfully, and without the heaviest anger of God, recognize or use any other sacred ministry than that of the tribe of Levi, and the house of Aaron; or that might contemn the appointed sacrifices, or live in wilful neglect of the most trivial sacred ordinances. Wherever an Israelite journeyed, in that land, he found one creed, one faith, one religious rite, one harmonious agreement, even in the minutest points of ceremonial worship. He was at home everywhere, as to his religion; for the church of the Old Testament was

purely catholic, as to the given extent of its possession."\*

The witness, doubtless sincerely delivering this enchanting testimony, must submit, though a very potent spell should be thereby dissolved, to cross examination.—How many temples would an Israelite, journeying from the Dan to Beersheba of that land, find in his travels?—How many altars where the ceremonial parts of his religion could be performed?

The fallacy commonly assumed on this question is that the land, from Dan to Beersheba, was covered with altars, and priests, and ceremonies, just as is now the case from one end to the other of Italy, or of any other country devoted to the Romish superstition; that these altars and ceremonies were everywhere alike; and that Jewish unity, and Roman catholic unity, is one the counterpart of the other.

They are—just as like to one another as Aaron is to Peter; the points of resemblance—say rather of difference and contrast—just as manifest and striking. From Dan to Beersheba there was but one temple—but one altar of burnt-offering for the people—but one place of service for the priests and Levites. To this one place the members of the sacred tribe came up, by turn, in courses. When each course had fulfilled its appointed service, the

\* Sibthorp's Answer to the Enquiry, Why have you become a Catholic?

vestments and vessels of service were transferred to those who took the next turn in office; and those who had completed their course returned to their dwellings, to spend an unofficial life, until the next period of their service at Jerusalem returned. It was the integrity, individuality, and continuousness of this one service which was guarded by such careful fences, and enforced by such solemn sanctions, and not the uniformity of many services carried on at different places; and to set up an imitation of the ceremonies of this one service, or of any part of them, elsewhere, was to incur the guilt and penalties of rebellion against God.

Had the people then no public worship besides that which was performed by the priests at the one temple? They had. There were synagogues in every place, in which Moses and the prophets were daily read and expounded, and prayer offered. The whole service of the synagogue was conducted, not by priests and Levites who had there no sacrificial rites to discharge, but by readers, elders, and rulers. No Divine law prescribing uniformity regulated these services. Liberty was permitted in their arrangements, with this exception, which deserves to be specially marked and remembered: There might be in them no altar—no sacrifice—no officiating priest—in a word, no uniformity with the service at the temple. It was unity, in the sense in which the Romanists hold it, which was solemnly and decisively prohibited. Diversity, if any public worship besides that conducted in the



temple were performed, was not merely permitted, was absolutely required.

Why was an imitation of the temple service prohibited elsewhere? Because that whole service, as performed by the one house of Aaron, typified the complete service performed in the plenitude of his Divine perfections by the one high priest of our profession Christ Jesus. To alter would have been to obscure—to abridge would have been to mutilate—to multiply would have been to divide and distract the attention which was to be given to the one continuous service, at the one temple, by the one house of Aaron, until it should be superseded and abolished by the one perfect continuous service of our Lord Jesus Christ, “who is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.”

There were, however, links of connection between the worship at the synagogues and the official services, discharging at the same time, in the temple, though there might not be any uniformity between them; and the relation which the one bore to the other most interestingly illustrates the relation which Christian worship, on earth, now bears to the services of our great High Priest, who ministers for us in heaven. A prominent part of the daily synagogue worship was the reading and expounding of that Levitical law which typified Christ, and of those prophets who all spake of “the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow;” while the more

strictly devotional parts of the service would have mental reference to the lamb of the daily, called also the continual, burnt-offering, then actually consuming on the altar in the temple, and to the sweet incense, from the censer of the one priest, then actually ascending in a fragrant cloud before Him who dwelt between the cherubim. This spiritual unity of minds, brought into fellowship by the living power of truth and devotion, is the true ideal of the Jewish church—a daily worship in all the synagogues of the land linked, by scriptural truth and mental exercise, with the one continuous priestly service of the one temple at Jerusalem—that mental worship of the whole church, in all her separate synagogues, acceptable to God by virtue of its intelligent and confiding relation to the priestly rites performed at the one temple in Jerusalem.

Keeping this true model of Jewish unity before us, where are we to look for its antitype in Christianity? Was there, during any part of Peter's life and labours, an intelligent and confiding relation between the worship of all Christian assemblies in the world and any services which he, in any particular place, was performing, or over which he was presiding? Did the worship of the universal church become acceptable to God by virtue of any sacrifice which he was offering and intercession which he was making? Is there now, with altars and masses, and censers innumerable to boot, any intelligent and confiding relation between the worship of the assemblies of the Romish church itself,

and the services which may be performing by him whom they call Peter's successor, the high pontiff, or his subordinates at Rome? Are not the supremacy, and the visible headship, and the centre of unity, even as claimed by the Romanists themselves, when closely examined and analyzed, and put into the light of true scriptural models, found to consist of names only without the elementary substances of the things which they pretend to be?—a pantomimic profanity of things holy, sublime, and heavenly?—a monstrous abortion of the human intellect, having none of the fair and beauteous proportions which mark every creation of Divine power and wisdom?

Is there any antitype of the Jewish model, *as a church*, now on earth? There is. Every Christian assembly in which the holy oracles, now complete and full of Christ, are read and expounded by faithful stewards of the mysteries of God—in which the devotional exercises, both of praise and prayer, have a mental, intelligent, confiding reference to Christ in the perfect work of propitiation which he is constantly performing for us in the heavenly temple, is the Jewish synagogue grown to the maturity of its age, and the fulness of its adoption into the light, liberty, and privileges of the Christian church. The true ideal of the Christian church universal on earth, as foreshadowed by the Jewish church, is this: The aggregate of such assemblies through the world, all yielding acknowledgment and obedience to Christ in his word—all maintaining

relation to Christ and reliance on him in his heavenly work—all, in the expansive charity of their mental exercises, enjoying fellowship in the truth as it is in Jesus, and open to one another in fraternal recognition and intercommunion, but acknowledging no church as mother besides the Jerusalem above, which *is* the mother of us all, and no head nor centre of unity besides Christ, who *is* the head of his body the church;—all moreover fellow-labourers in the work of filling the earth with the knowledge of the offices discharged by their common Saviour in the heavenly temple, where, as Lord over all, he is rich unto all that call upon him, and waits, until all the families of the earth submit themselves, and become blessed in him.

It is not essential, to the embodying of this true ideal of the Christian church universal, that all subordinate questions, which refer to modes of worship and forms of government, should previously be settled, and that all assemblies should be brought to conform to one and the same outward standard. The “pattern in the mount” was given of old for the tabernacle, and enlarged for the temple, not for the synagogues. That pattern is completed in Christ’s perfect work on Mount Zion which is above, and is altogether beyond the reach of our imitation, and entirely independent of our arrangements. Amid all the mistaken and fatuous efforts of those who have called themselves by his name, to produce an outward and visible uniformity on

earth, the Saviour has been calmly and steadily pursuing his heavenly ministry, and saving to the uttermost all those who have come to God by him. He has prescribed no forms for Christian assemblies as, of old, there were no forms prescribed for Jewish synagogues. There was, of old, wisdom in leaving the synagogues free, as there was wisdom in confining the temple service within fixed and inflexible rules. The synagogue worship could be more easily extended and adapted to the differing circumstances of different localities when unfettered, than it could had it been bound by laws as fixed and determinate as those which prescribed the temple service. If there was wisdom in leaving free from inflexible forms the worship which was to be extended into multiplying assemblies through the different districts of one country, how much more in leaving that free from inflexible forms which is destined to extend through the world, and gather assemblies in every place where the habitations of man can be reared, or the tents of the wanderers be pitched, or the keel of the vessel cut the dividing wave! It is one proof of the Divine origin of Christianity that, rising in an age, and among a people, who, beyond all others, had subjected themselves to the bondage of forms, it yet started from its birthplace sufficiently free and elastic in its step to traverse the earth; and that it prescribes nothing, as essential to its worship, which cannot be performed at any point of latitude or longitude on the land, or the sea, where

two or three can meet together in its Divine Founder's name.

The sum of the whole case is this: The temple service, as discharged by the priests at one place where the power and resources of the nation could be concentrated, and circumstances be made to bend and combine in the production of one fixed and unvarying ministry, *foreshadowed* the work of Christ, who, in the plenitude of his Divine perfections, subjects all power in heaven and in earth to his gracious will and purpose, and therefore enters on the work of an unchangeable priesthood;—the more free and simple worship of the synagogue, adapting itself to the feebler combinations of man's social state, in which, instead of having the power to control circumstances, he is frequently compelled to yield and to modify his arrangements by them, *foreshadowed* the worship of Christian assemblies, which may be sufficiently complete to secure the promised presence of the Divine Master in the most limited and diminished form of social intercourse—two or three gathering in his name;—the relation between the worship of the synagogue and the service of the temple, which were linked together, not by ritual conformity, for that was severely and decisively prohibited, but by mental operations on things unseen called into activity by the word of truth and devotional utterances, *foreshadowed* the relation intended to subsist between Christian assemblies and the service of the High Priest of our profession in the heavenly temple, opened to our view in the

lessons of Scripture and the preaching of the gospel, while the heart of prayer rises to enter by him and with him into the holiest sanctuary of the Divine presence, and the hymn of praise gives utterance in unison and fellowship with angelic harmonies to the feelings of thanksgiving and joy;—the general gatherings of the nation at the three annual festivals, when the people left their synagogues, and went from strength to strength on every road which led to Jerusalem, and at length all the tribes appeared together in Zion before God, *foreshadowed* the gathering of all true worshippers out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation to Mount Zion which is above—the heavenly Jerusalem, that they may there constitute the general assembly and church of the first-born who shall raise in full chorus the everlasting song, “Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

But now, in the view of these true analogies, we have to ask where is the place for the supreme pontiff like to Aaron at Rome? and where the place and the use of the subordinate priests, and altars, and censers, and varied vessels of the costly Romish service as it is performed in different parts of the world? When the true temple was an earthly sanctuary—the appointed sacrifice an irrational, though innocent, lamb—the authorised priest

a mere mortal man, no imitation of the service might be made, no conformity to it might be attempted, on pain of the heaviest Divine displeasure. How is it, now that the temple is heavenly,—the sacrifice the spotless humanity of the Lord Jesus,—the Priest the Son of God,—how is it that there may now be imitations, and attempted conformity to these heavenly things in any earthly place which will submit to the supremacy of Rome, and receive a priest invested with the orders which she undertakes to confer? Where is the warrant for the creation of either priest, or altar, or sacrifice, or censer? Where is “the pattern in the mount?” *There is none.* In the strongest tone in which the words could be uttered, we are emboldened to say—*there is none.* Where is the argument from analogy? We think we are entitled to appeal to the understanding of our readers—judge ye what we say—when we reply—*that it is gone.* What is the unity of which the assumed successors of St. Peter profess to be the head and centre? A unity of ritual ceremonies—the whole being of human invention, and constructed by hands which scrupled not to take whatever they could adapt to their unlawful purpose of subjecting the Christian church to the yoke of ceremonial bondage, whether found in Levitical Jerusalem or Pagan Rome. What is the head and centre of that unity himself? An intruder into an office to which he can show no call like that of Aaron—an usurper—antichrist—the more lofty his pretensions, the more manifest his



personification of "the man of sin." What is the city for whose glory the supremacy of Peter has been constructed and claimed? Can any other compete with her for the title, written by the pen of prophecy for her forehead, which she has raised so unblushingly above all the kings of the earth, and in the face of all its nations, "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH?"

## LECTURE III.

THE PERMANENT ORDERS OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY REDUCED  
TO THEIR SCRIPTURAL STANDARD—THEIR DUAL NUMBER ; OR,  
THE MODEL CHURCH AT PHILIPPI, WITH ITS BISHOPS AND  
DEACONS.

“Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Jesus Christ which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.”—*Philip*. i. 1.

THE subject of the present lecture is “the Orders of the Christian ministry.” It should be remembered that the whole Bible is a ministry performed by many hands, in harmonious and divinely-directed combination, for the service of the church. Patriarchs and prophets, priests and kings, apostles and evangelists, do here perpetuate their varied, yet, in concert, their perfect work—not by a lineal succession which might degenerate—not by a bodily presence which might sometimes have its infirmities and be contemned—not by an audible tongue which might occasionally be slow, hesitating, trembling in its words, but by the spiritual and immortal part of their nature—by their mind and soul as enjoying

the plenitude of heavenly inspiration. Their inner man lives before us, and communes with us, in their writings, although their outward man has perished. The words recorded by their pens have in them the capability of translation into all the languages and dialects of mankind—of speaking to every successive generation of our race—of conveying to every devoutly-enquiring mind the truth with which they were separately, continuously, unitedly endowed. “Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope.” “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” Indeed some parts of the writings of the prophets were intended to shed a clearer light on our path than they did on the path of those in whose company the prophets walked—to be better understood by those who afterwards should read, than, at the time, they would be even by those who wrote. “Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.”

As the writers of holy Scripture do still, with one consent, minister the truth of God to all who read the words they wrote, so do they also record

for our information the services of every kind of living ministry, with its titles and functions, which God has at any time appointed for the instruction and salvation of mankind. With models of a true ministry in all its various kinds, they also present us with specimens of spurious imitations. They place before us in contrast, sometimes in actual conflict, the Divine appointment and the human usurpation. They warn us against "false teachers." They command us to "Try the spirits whether they be of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world." They forewarn us that the abounding of such teachers will be the great affliction and corruption of Christianity—that they will invade the temple of God, and exalt themselves to his throne.

The course we have taken through the two preceding lectures has brought us, again and again, into the view of such a ministry. We have seen that an office, like that of Aaron, has been assumed, while, by those claiming it, no call, like that of Aaron, can be produced. We have seen that functions, like those of Moses, have been employed by those who never went, like Moses, into the Mount, and in no other way ever obtained from God a pattern for their work. We shall see, as we advance, that, in the exercise of the powers which they have usurped, they have invented orders for which there are no models to be found in holy Scriptures; and that they have so constructed and graduated these orders that the ambition of rising must necessarily

be inherent in the system, ever working through all its parts, and therefore the more likely to become insatiable, and aiming at the throne of God.

In the ministry of the Church of Rome, there are seven orders; and consequently the individual who advances by regular gradation through the whole becomes partaker of a sevenfold ordination. The first and lowest in the series is that of porter, who, at his ordination, receives the key that he may have charge of the door of the church. The second is that of reader, who receives the book which contains the lessons which he is to read to the people. The third is that of exorcist, who also receives a book containing the exorcisms, which he is charged to commit to memory that he may employ them on those who are possessed. The fourth is that of acolyte, who is to perform, as assistant of the priest, the more servile work of the ministry of the altar, and who receives, as the symbols of his office, the candlestick and the wine-vessel. These four are called the minor orders. We then rise to what are called the greater orders. The subdeacon, who receives the book of the epistles, with power to read the appointed lessons from that portion of the New Testament both for the living and the dead. The deacon, who receives the gospels, with corresponding power as to the lessons appointed from them. And then the priest, who is invested with the stole, anointed with sacred oil, entrusted with the chalice and the patina, endowed with power to offer sacrifice to God, and to cele-

brate the mass for the living and the dead, and charged, in the words of Christ addressed to the apostles, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained."

Yet, though the number seven includes all the orders of the ministry, it does not include all the degrees which these orders contain. The Council of Trent, which determined the number of the orders, in its catechism, thus dilates the highest order, that of the priest, and unfolds its degrees: "The order of priesthood, although essentially one, has different degrees of dignity and power. The first is confined to those who are simply called priests, and whose functions we have now explained. The second is that of bishops, who are placed over their respective sees, to govern not only the other ministers of the church, but also the faithful, and with sleepless vigilance and unwearyed care to watch over and promote their salvation." The third degree is that of archbishop; in the fourth place are patriarchs; "and superior to all these is the sovereign pontiff, whom Cyril, Archbishop of Alexandria, denominated, in the Council of Ephesus, 'the father and patriarch of the whole world.'" In other words, Cyril, who had ambitiously climbed some of the steps which lead up to the throne of God, and had become invested with a title and orders which the apostles never knew, compliments another, who has been daring enough to go higher, and ascend the throne itself,

with the wonderful success of his undertaking; and he, even in the inflated fulness of his usurpation, inwardly conscious of the poverty and emptiness of his claims, thankfully receives and carefully publishes the impious flattery, thus making more manifest the fact that his dominion stands in the word of man, and not in the power of God.

The ministry of the Anglican church consists of three orders, "bishops, priests, and deacons." Yet the highest order here is divided into two degrees, bishop, and archbishop; while the lower orders may be connected with other titles and offices, varied in their designations and functions, such as canon, prebend, dean, archdeacon, &c. But as the rite of ordination is limited to the three orders, beginning at the lowest and ascending to the highest, to them only need our attention be directed.

In justice also to the evangelical portion of the English clergy, it must be stated that, while the authorized formularies of their church compel them to designate the middle order by the term priest, they repudiate the leading idea involved in that term and commonly associated with it. They distinguish between a sacrificing priest and a teaching priest. They renounce the former, and hold to the latter. Were they able to alter the nomenclature of their orders, they would prefer to designate the middle order *presbyter*, instead of priest; and then their ministry would stand thus—bishops, presbyters, and deacons.

Now, one source of the heresy which at present overruns the English episcopal church is this: That when the branches of the Romish superstition were lopped off, and the trunk was hewn down and removed, not a few of the roots were left in the ground. Terms and phrases were allowed to remain in the protestant formularies which had been appropriated by the spirit of error, and which could lie latent in the soil waiting favourable times and seasons for development and growth. A favourable season has recently offered, and how rapidly has the ground been covered with the saplings which have sprung from the old and buried roots. Saplings it is true they are, and saplings only. They will never attain to the vigour and maturity of the ancient tree. They will cumber the ground, exhaust the soil, then wither and die. The origin of what is commonly called Puseyism may be expressed in few words. The hot manure of priestly ambition has been skilfully applied to every part of the English ritual where a root or fibre of the old Romish stock could be found. The present success of the experiment exceeds all the calculations which could previously have been formed. Yet early and rapid growth are prognostics neither of strength nor fruitfulness. The issue may be, not fragrant blossoms, and boughs bending beneath the weight of fruit, but the garden turned into a wilderness, and given up to barrenness.



Our present work in this soil is with the root out of which the orders grow. This root is perhaps the strongest of the whole, and that which is most deeply imbedded in the ground. We wish to get to the bottom of it, and shall therefore direct our labour to the orders in the most moderated form in which we have referred to them—not as they appear in the Roman pontifical seven, and the highest rising into four lofty degrees, the sovereign pontiff crowning the whole—not as they appear in the Anglican offices, bishops, *priests*, and deacons, but as they would appear if the wishes of the more evangelical part of the clergy could be accomplished, bishops, *presbyters*, and deacons. If we can get to this lowest part of the root, and unearth it, all that is higher, whether in order or degree, must of necessity come away with it. We hope to show that there were not three orders in the churches which the apostles planted, give them what names you please—we hope to show that the order which, on the theory of apostolical succession, is that which claims to be the *producer* of the rest, derives no appointment from apostolic hands; and consequently, that for a different and yet more conclusive reason than any which we have hitherto adduced, that whole theory is an imposition and a fable.

We must here premise that, if the seven orders of the Romish priesthood, or the three orders of the Anglican ministry, could be found clearly des-

cribed upon the pages of the New Testament, and thus be connected with apostolic appointment and superintendence, it would not therefore necessarily follow that they must be perpetuated in the church by a spiritually lineal descent. That is a mode of descent and propagation which has no archetype in nature—no special beauty nor fitness to commend it to a penetrating reason which finds out and puts together the hidden links that connect God's varied and wonderful works with each other—no affinity and harmony, but, on the contrary, a marked discordance with essential theological truth, as that which declares that Christians are born “not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” Such a mode of perpetuation, did it really exist, must be found in some special appointment of God, and be declared in some unequivocal words of revelation. No such words can be adduced; no such appointment can therefore be admitted. If then the orders in question were found ever so clearly designated in the New Testament, the argument against the assumed mode of their succession would remain just where it was before. The mere scriptural existence of any specific number of orders, whatever their designations, could never, in itself, prove that one out of the number was invested with power to produce and perpetuate all the rest. But if the orders themselves are not such orders as the apostles in their writings recognise and describe, then what are we to think of the system which claims from

the apostles both authority and paternity? A man may be in possession of an estate which he may have acquired honestly, by bequest or purchase, without troubling himself to look for a genealogy and paternity—and who, in such a case, would wish to disturb or question the right of occupation? but if he rest his right to its enjoyment exclusively on his lineal descent—if he disparage and defame all his neighbours, and there should be a document from which you can demonstrate that he gives a false account of what he calls his family; that the whole line of his boasted descent has no connection with the original ancestry; and that, instead of having power to rule and confer privileges, he has no authorized place himself in the house,—then surely it becomes a duty to examine the evidence contained in the document, and expose to the light the groundless assumptions of the defamer.

The document in the case before us is the New Testament. The question which we have to examine and decide by it, the authority, as apostolic institutes, of three orders in the Christian ministry, bishops, presbyters, and deacons.

The text, placed at the head of this discourse, presents a starting-point, and opens our path. “Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.”

Let us examine the authority of three orders in the Christian ministry by the light of this apostolic salutation.

We could in no part of the sphere of apostolic labours find a spot more interesting and attractive than Philippi. The guidance of Paul to it was distinct and heavenly. "In a vision, there stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us." It was the chief city in that part of Macedonia, and the first, not only in Macedonia, but in Europe, in which Paul opened his commission. The church formed at Philippi must have been the first which Paul formed in Europe. If priority of formation in any region could give the title and relation of maternity to other churches, subsequently formed in that region, this church at Philippi would be pre-eminently a mother church. In all probability no apostle had at this time visited Rome, and the Christian community in Rome itself, in such endowments as an apostle only could confer, might have been far behind this church at Philippi. The name of Lydia, whose heart the Lord had opened, was inscribed at the head of its list of members. The jailor and his household were subsequently enrolled in their number. Grateful affection towards the apostle never grew cold and barren in this church; its fruits were sent to him by faithful messengers when he was a prisoner at Rome, apparently neglected by the Christians of the imperial city, some of whom, by the factious spirit which they manifested, intended moreover to give him pain. Philippi and Rome are thus singularly brought together. What a contrast the apostle's eye must

have seen in their respective churches. His pen perpetuates that contrast, that we may see it, and draw our inferences from it. He tells the Philippians that at Rome "some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good-will: the one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds." He tells them, as to themselves, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now."

Three things, then, may be fairly inferred as to this church at Philippi. 1. That its constitution was complete, according to what the apostle himself thought the constitution of a church ought to be. 2. That its constitution was thoroughly efficient—that it worked entirely according to the apostle's mind. 3. That there had been sufficient time to test both the completeness of the constitution and the efficiency of its working.

As to the constitution of this church, it was the workmanship of the apostle's own hand. He was the chief labourer employed in the origination of the church, and under his superintendence its ministry had been appointed. He visited Philippi certainly once, and in all probability more than once, after the formation of the church, and before he wrote the epistle to its members. He must have found every thing in the arrangements of the church, in the deportment of its members, and in

the work of its ministers, fully to his mind. He saw the healthful growth of that which he had himself planted—the enlargement of the church according to the model which he had himself originally formed. That which he had seen on his visits, as well as that which he had seen when first planting and watering the church, had become part of the most precious store of his memory, which delighted to retain every impression produced by moral excellence wherever witnessed, and converted it into incense, which, thrown upon the flame of devotion ever burning in his heart, sent up a cloud of fragrance before God—"I thank my God upon every remembrance of you."

This remembrance included a period of ten years. So much time had elapsed between the formation of the church and the writing of the epistle to its members. Supposing, therefore, that the circumstances of trial and persecution which accompanied the apostle's entrance and first labours among the Philippians had prevented, at that period, the full development of the apostolic constitution, time had been given for circumstances to alter, and the apostle's subsequent visits had furnished fit opportunity to supply, whatever might have been deficient. Put all the facts of the case together—connect with them the commendation "*Ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence;*" and it will be found difficult to conceive of circumstances more likely to produce and exhibit a model church than those which belong to

the church at Philippi. In view of the whole, we think we are warranted to call the church of the Philippians *a model church*.

This church at Philippi, on account of the associations so satisfactory and pleasing which are connected with it, lives before the apostle's mental eye more vividly, and recurs more frequently, than does any other church. As it stands before his view, and he looks affectionately on it, looks carefully through it, distributes it into its parts, discriminates its officers, and pours out the refreshing stream of his kind and generous feeling, intended to flow through every channel, and to find its way into every heart,—how many orders of the ministry does his eye behold?—does his salutation greet? Not seven—not even three. He had appointed, he beholds, he salutes *two* orders only—bishops, who, as their title indicates, are overseers, ministers of the word, and deacons, whose work it is to serve tables; in other words, pastors, who attend to the spiritualities of the church—deacons, who attend to its temporalities.

Let us now bring the three orders of the Anglican church into the pure and heavenly light of this apostolic church at Philippi. What must be done to make the Anglican church, in the orders of its ministry, like the Philippian?—the modern like the ancient?—like the most ancient church in Europe?—like that which has special claims to be considered the model church? If we attend to phraseology and nomenclature only, we must strike the Anglican

middle order, call it priest or presbyter as you please, out of the list, and take it entirely away. There will then be, as at Philippi, the bishops and deacons. But then there is taken away, not a fraction of the ministry only, which might be spared without seriously diminishing the working force; it is the working body which is gone, and the powerless skeleton only which remains. Or, as though in an army, you disbanded the troops which had performed the service, and retained only the recruits and the field officers—the deacons, who have just entered on the discharge of the lowest functions of the ministry—the bishops, the select few, who have reached the highest, and command. The consequences, not very remote, would be far worse than the case supposed. In the ministry of the church all must enter the service in the first, or lowest order; and none can reach the third, or highest order, without going through the second. Take away the second, and the third must soon die out, because there is now a gulf, instead of a path, in the way of those who would rise up to it. And then when the third, or highest order, has died out, the first, or lowest, must at length perish also, because the third is the paternal, the producing order; and if there be no individual capable of becoming a bishop, who only can ordain, then none can be ordained. So that when we bring into the clear light, which shines directly upon us from apostolic times and apostolic appointments, the three orders only of the Anglican church—to say nothing of the seven



orders of the Romish church—and these orders being so connected that every individual ascending to the highest must enter at the lowest, and pass through the successive steps which lead to the highest, we find the comparison to be fatal to the authority, and the life, not merely of one of the three which is ejected, but to the other two also, which, by the loss of the middle power, become disjointed fragments—the highest failing in the loss of that out of which only it can grow, and, then, the lowest failing in the loss of that by which only it can be produced. In other words, the whole so called “apostolical succession” withers and dies in the face, and amid the light of clearly ascertained apostolical constitutions.

Let us give the parties the advantage of discarding their nomenclature, that we may look at their orders in their functions—in their essential character and work—rather than in the names which ill-judging sponsors have given to them. They have no right to this advantage. Those who prefer high pretensions, and offensive claims, should not only clearly define, and firmly bottom, the grounds of their authority, but should also accurately designate both their offices and their functions. The individual who wears priest, writ largely on his orders, and knows that he cannot sustain the position in which the title places him, retreats with a very bad grace, while this name is on his forehead, behind the defences of presbyter; while the advocate of three orders, by Divine right, bishops, priests, and

deacons, makes but sorry work when he untwists the threefold cord that he may put its different parts together in some new form of combination.

Let us see, however, what might be made out of a new form of combination. It may be said that the Philippian bishop was the prototype of the Anglican presbyter; that he did what many of the latter faithfully do now—watched over and fed a portion of the flock which was committed to his care. We accept this interpretation. We shall presently adduce proof to establish the identity of bishop and presbyter. We can also very cheerfully admit, and bear our testimony to, the pastoral excellence of many of the Anglican presbyters. But the question before us is not one of comparative excellence in pastoral relations, but of the authority of ministerial orders. Put presbyters and deacons instead of bishops and deacons, and then what will be the state of the case? You bring back, on this functional statement, the whole force of the middle order, but you do this at the expense and loss of both the other orders. Your Anglican bishop is now admitted to be not in the likeness, nor of the class, nor consequently the true successor, of the Philippian bishop; he is therefore ejected. So neither, in a functional statement, for reasons which will at length be shown, is your Anglican deacon in the likeness, and of the class, and the true successor, of the Philippian deacon. The Anglican churchwarden, never included in the orders of the ministry, is the true successor of the Philip-

pian deacon. He serves the tables. He takes that charge which, in primitive times, would include the temporalities of the church.\*

Now then bring the three orders to the apostolical standard, not by their nomenclature, but by their functions. The functions of the modern presbyter correspond with those of the Philippian bishop. The functions of the modern churchwarden correspond with those of the Philippian deacon. The presbyter is the minister of the word—the churchwarden is the minister of the tables. That there is a natural tendency in the church to this order of formation, and a consequent evidence in its favour arising from the fitness of things, is obvious from the fact that Anglican congregations, which are not parochial, approximate very nearly to the Philippian model now. The prelate's relation to the church, in these cases, and to its sacred or secular ministry, is little more than nominal, and if any interference take place it is an annoyance, not a help—an evil submitted to, not a blessing coveted.

But then what becomes of the argument for the three orders, by Divine right, and spiritual succession. In the first place an ecclesiastical officer is introduced, still deriving his appointment as of old from popular election, and performing under another

\* "It seems, that for many centuries the *ordinary* office of the deacon related rather to such duties as are now performed by our parish clerks and *churchwardens* than to the higher parts of the ministerial office."—*Treatise on the Church of Christ*, by Rev. W. Palmer, M.A. vol. ii. p. 405.

name the functions of the primitive deacon, but deriving no grace from the prelate, and admitted to no relationship with him, nor with any part of the sacerdotal family. In the second place, the introduction of this officer, the true deacon, displaces two of the orders which stand upon apostolical succession—the lowest, by taking its place as the proper representative of the Philippian deacon—the highest, by uniting with the presbyter to make the Philippian number complete without the admission of the prelate. If the prelate, who claims the exclusive possession of the paternal functions, be thus ejected from the house, the whole family, which stands there by no other right than relationship to him, must leave with him. So that, by this functional statement of the case, as well as by the titular, the whole theory of the spiritual succession becomes a nullity; and those who possess no other title to the office of the Christian ministry, than that which they find in their boasted orders, are entirely destitute of scriptural authority.

It may be asked here, Is the single case of this Philippian church of sufficient clearness and authority to settle so wide and important a question as that which, in the light derived from it, we have been examining? Might there not have been some difference between the orders of the ministry in this church and those which were appointed in others? Might there not have been some anomaly in its constitution—some exception to a more general rule?

It may be answered, That the formation of other churches is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles ; that to several of these churches epistles were written ; but that, as the three orders do not appear, either in the records of the labours of the apostles or in any of their epistles, the presumption must be that the orders of the ministry in other churches corresponded with those in the church at Philippi. The light which shines from this first of European churches may then be deemed sufficiently clear to lead us through the interior of all the rest, presenting to us the saints in their fellowship, with the bishops and deacons.

But we are not left to mere presumption in the case. There is another source from which the general rule for all churches may be derived ; and that general rule will be found to be in perfect harmony with the individual case, which we have exhibited, in the church at Philippi.

In the First Epistle of Paul to Timothy, he lays down the qualifications which should be found in those who are fitted for appointment to office. In writing to the Philippians, he greets the bishops and deacons as actually discharging the duties assigned to their respective offices. In writing to Timothy, he contemplates the appointment for other churches, not yet fully supplied, of the same orders of bishops and deacons, and of those only.

“This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of *a bishop*, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant,

sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity (for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?); not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. Likewise must *the deacons* be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless.”\*

The notice of these instructions which were given to Timothy is the more important, because one prop of the theory we have been examining, and which, before we have done, we shall have to take down and remove, is constructed out of the work which was assigned to Timothy. At present we wish it only to be marked and remembered that the orders of the ministry, about which Timothy was to employ his mind and hands, were of two classes, and no more; and that these two classes corresponded, both in name and in functions, with those who are greeted in the church at Philippi, “bishops and deacons.”

And now the question must be settled as to the

\* 1 Tim. iii. 1—10.

relation between the bishop and the elder, or presbyter. Does not the English reader often find in the New Testament the phrase, “the elders of the church?” and once in 1 Tim. iv. 14, the Greek word for elders not translated, but only Anglicised in form—the presbytery? Might there not then be some deficiency at Philippi, and some omission in the instructions given to Timothy? Might it not be possible therefore to complete the three orders by combining light from two places? Might not Ephesus, for instance, be put with Philippi, and the elders or presbyters of Ephesus be inserted between the bishops and deacons of Philippi, thus making three orders, bishops, presbyters, and deacons? Let us look at the case in this light.

At Miletus the apostle sent to Ephesus, and called to him the elders of the church—the *πρεσβυτεροὶ*. In the course of his address to them, however, he says, “Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers,”—in the original *ἐπίσκοποι*; as translated in our text, and in the passage we have quoted from Timothy, and in most other places in which the word occurs—bishops. Here then we have conclusive proof that the elders and bishops are not two distinct and separate orders, but one and the same order under two different names. The one name, bishop, indicating the work which they have to perform, to overlook the flock; the other name, presbyter, indicating one of the qualifications desirable for the individual who was

to discharge this work—maturity of age—the elder.

Nor does this conclusion rest on a single passage, however clear that passage may be in itself. In the epistle to Titus, Paul writes to him, “For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders (πρεσβυτεροι) in every city, as I had appointed thee: if any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot, or unruly. For a bishop (ἐπίσκοπος) must be blameless, as the steward of God.”\* In this passage the Greek, ἐπίσκοπος, being translated bishop, the English version is as clear and satisfactory on the point in question—the identity of elder and bishop—as is the original itself in the passage we have quoted from the Acts.

But here a difficulty meets us. Neither in the address to the elders of the Ephesian church, who had come to meet the apostle at Miletus, nor in the instructions which he gave to Titus, is there any reference to the deacons. How are we to account for their omission in both these cases?

There are two solutions of this difficulty which present themselves.

First, That the word elder is a generic term of office, simply indicating one primary quality, age, and comprehending different kinds of species which possess this quality in common. Thus Peter and John, who filled the apostolic office, both designate

\* Titus i. 5—7.



themselves elders—that is, presbyters. “The elders which are among you I exhort, who also am an elder.” So writes Peter. “The elder unto the elect lady”—“the elder unto the beloved Gaius.” So writes John. And to him, as we showed in our last lecture, the title, descriptive of age, must, at length, have pre-eminently belonged—he became the patriarch of the Christian church.

This solution would have cleared up the whole difficulty, if the generic term elder had been continued through every part of the address at Miletus, and the instructions to Titus. But since, in both cases, a specific class is introduced, and all who are called elders at Miletus are also called bishops; and since, when Paul is writing to Titus about the elders, the bishop is again specified as the class to which he is referring, the question returns, How is it that, in both cases, the specification stops at the bishops, and the deacons are omitted?

There is a second solution of the question, which not only removes all the difficulty of the case, but also contributes clearness, harmony, and power to the general argument which, in this discourse, we are pursuing. That solution is, That the offices of bishop and deacon, although both are of Divine authority and apostolical appointment, are yet so different in their nature and functions, that you may find sufficient reason for the occasional omission of the one when the other is referred to. We have already expressed, in general terms, the nature of that difference, reserving to this, the proper place

for that work, the illustration and proof of what we then found it convenient merely to assume. The nature of that difference, we now repeat, is, that the office of the bishop contemplates the spiritualities of the church—the office of the deacon the temporalities.

And now we must go back to the origin of the diaconal office. The origin of this office, and the purpose for which it was instituted, are both as carefully recorded, and as clearly defined, as are the origin and the design of the apostolic, or even of the Levitical office.

“And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.”\*

\* Acts vi. 1—6.

The phrase in this passage, "to serve tables," is obviously employed to describe the trust and distribution of the funds of the church. There was then but one source whence those funds were derived—the voluntary contributions of the people. Yet the funds derived from this source were sufficiently ample: "For as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet." There were inconveniences, however, which arose from this abundant liberality and implicit confidence. Those who received the distribution accorded to the apostles less of gratitude and trust than did those who supplied it. Their hands, though "they coveted no man's silver or gold," were encumbered. Their minds were embarrassed with conflicting claims and expectations. Their ministry was liable to reproach and hinderance. They feel the necessity—they see the reasonableness of devolving the whole of these affairs upon the hands of others, who are known and approved for their wisdom, piety, and integrity. In transferring the funds of the church to the deacons, they transferred to them, at once, the administration of all temporal affairs. They placed the table for their own supply in the same hands to which they committed that for the widows and the poor. They transferred to the deacons, not only the confidence of the church, which had hitherto been reposed in themselves, but also their own confidence for all the pecuniary supply which they themselves might require. They

established a principle most wise and healthful, and which, in its exhibition, was to last as long as the imperishable pages which record the measures they, on this occasion, directed: that the pecuniary affairs of the church should be transacted by officers elected for that purpose *from the church*, and responsible to the body from which they derive their appointment and their funds; and that their administration should relieve the hands and minds of those who, feeding the flock, and watching for souls as they who must render to the Lord an account of their work, may “give themselves to prayer, and the ministry of the word.”

And here we find, at once, a sufficient reason why the apostle did not call the deacons of the church at Ephesus to Miletus. They derived their office from the election of the people; they administered the funds which were contributed by the people; they were responsible for that administration only to the people. Paul, acting in the spirit and following the example of those who were before him in Christ and in the apostolate, felt no desire to interfere with their work. They owed no report to him. He had no court into which they could bring any of their affairs. The idea of inspecting or revising their accounts never occurred to his mind. Like his brethren who had enjoyed the pentecostal endowment, his sympathies were with those who ministered the word, and his care of the churches related to their spiritual welfare. As there was no reason why the apostles at Jerusalem should leave

the word of God to serve tables, so, in the strict analogy of the case, there was no reason why Paul should call, to meet him at Miletus, those to whom that work had been committed at Ephesus.

Then, as the functions of the diaconal office are so different in their nature from those which belong to that which, in the scriptural use of the term, may be called the episcopal,—the former having earth and time for their immediate sphere and scope, the latter heaven and eternity,—we can see a sufficient reason why, in a brief epistle like that to Titus, in which it was not convenient to embrace both offices, the latter only, as being the more important, would absorb the interest of the writer, and obtain exclusive attention.

And here, in the omission of the diaconal office from the instructions which were given to Titus, an inference very important to our general case is clearly deducible, which is, that the ecclesiastical ladder with its ascending steps, the lowest to be first entered before the second can be reached, and each one in order as an individual is climbing to the top, was not constructed by the hands of the apostles. They knew nothing in their own history and progress of the ladder with eleven steps—porter, reader, exorcist, acolyte, subdeacon, deacon, priest, bishop, archbishop, patriarch, pontiff; nor even of that with three steps—deacon, priest, bishop. The office which was filled by “the twelve” was the highest which the Lord ever appointed; but they were chosen to it at once. When Saul the persecutor

was called, a revelation was given to him from heaven which qualified him for the same office; and he was put among the apostles without passing through any subordinate degrees or orders. In the instructions which he gives to Timothy, the care to select good bishops is put first in order; and it is assumed that the desire of that office might properly rise in any mind originally, and independently of any other office, and that individuals, found to be properly qualified, might be ordained to it as the first and only office they might ever have to fill. The care to select good deacons is put next in order, and the utmost which can be made of the declaration, that "they that have used the office of a deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree," is, that it was possible to rise from the one office to the other. But, as in the epistle to Titus, instructions are given for ordination to the superior office only, not merely without any limitation in the choice to those who had sustained the inferior, but without even a reference to them, the conclusion must be undeniable, that the common practice was to elect and ordain to the superior office those who had never filled any other. This apostolic practice is not in the order, is not now in the power, of those who obtain their office by what they call an apostolical succession. They have fixed and bound themselves to a mode of procreation by steps and degrees. They cannot reach to the freedom and power of a perfect apostolic production. To travail again in birth with the same

individuals, the necessity for which was so grievous to Paul in the case of the Galatians, is the unapostolic law to which they have subjected themselves in bondage. Ever labouring, and never producing a true apostolic progeny, is the malediction which follows, and ever will follow, their lapse from apostolic simplicity and purity.

We have thus entered and laid open the interior of the church at Philippi. We have examined and exposed its constitution. We have seen that there ministered in it two classes of officers—the bishops, whose functions regarded spiritual things—the deacons, whose functions regarded temporal things. We have shown satisfactory reasons for concluding that this was the apostolic arrangement for the churches in general, and not a special arrangement for this church in particular. We have shown that the terms bishop and elder were synonymous, since they are applied to the same persons, and describe, under different aspects, the same office. We have seen that those who sustained that office, whether we give it the title of bishop or presbyter, did not constitute a middle order of three degrees, that could be reached only by going through that which was lower and that might lead to the one which was higher, but that it might be entered at once, and, so far as we have yet seen, conducted to no one that was higher. Any man might desire the office of a bishop—be commended for that desire; and, if he possessed the necessary endowments, be

ordained to that office first, and alone—he ranked with the elders, and there remain fixed in class and order for life, however he might increase in knowledge, and holiness, and consequently in moral influence and power.

And now, these conclusions follow: that the prelatical or procreating bishop had no place in this apostolic, this model church at Philippi; that he has purloined the name which he wears from the members of the apostolic family to which he himself does not belong; that, not being one of the family, he is very imperfectly acquainted with its arrangements and members; that, in consequence of the false position which he occupies, and the dazzling, yet illusive, lights by which he is encompassed, he may be expected to give a very confused and fabulous account of that family; and that his pretensions to be *sole perpetuator* of the family is one of the most monstrous delusions which has ever exercised its power over the credulity of mankind.

We have looked into the interior of the church at Philippi. We have found no third order of the ministry—no prelate—no procreating bishop within. It does not necessarily follow that there might not be one without, which might be brought occasionally into contact with it, and exercise the functions necessary to create and perpetuate its ministry. It will be required that we should give the theory of the succession which we have been examining the benefit of this supposition, as an



opportunity of escape from the difficulties we have brought around it. We offer no objection. If the enclosure at Philippi be too confined a space for the life and growth of the theory in question, let it come forth and have its range in the wide expanse of heaven. We know in what direction it will take its flight, and are prepared to follow it. Let us see if, either in the ethereal and supernatural elements of Christianity, or in the lower and earthly elements of Judaism, it can find a resting-place in which its position can be maintained and its strength be restored.

One thing we have earned a right to demand: that the title of bishop, in the potency of which name the procreating power has professed to find and perform its occult wonders, should be left behind in the enclosure at Philippi. It belongs to one of the orders which we have found within that enclosure, and cannot be claimed by any other order which may now present itself from without. We have quoted every passage in the New Testament in which the word *ἐπίσκοπος* occurs, except one in which it is applied to the Lord Jesus himself—"the Shepherd and *Bishop* of souls." All offices, all titles, all functions, combine in his one person and mediatorial work. He is all, and in all. Every one, whom he employs in the ministry of his church, must be content and thankful to take the names and functions which he assigns, and cannot, consistently with allegiance to him, either claim or employ any other. He, by the mouth and the pen

of his apostle, gave the name of bishop to those who were within the enclosure at Philippi, and to those who held a corresponding position in other churches—to the pastors of the flock who, enclosed within the fold, dwelt among and watched over the sheep. He gave the title bishop to no others. If, then, any others come wearing this title, he opens no door by which they can enter the fold. They climb up by the ladder which they themselves have made, and must, at length, settle with him the question as to whether or not they have been thieves and robbers.

Our protest at present is entered against the purloining by the prelates of the name of bishop, which, whether they are right or wrong in their claims to procreating power, did belong to the pastors of the flock at Philippi, does belong to every faithful pastor still, but does not belong to any other order. We repeat it, that out of the circle through which we have passed, the title *ἐπίσκοπος* does not occur in the New Testament. If, then, there can be found a third and higher order entitled to claim superior dignity, and empowered to discharge superior functions, that order is not an order of bishops. That title has already been appropriated, by the word of inspiration, to those whom the advocates of three orders call the second, and to them alone. To take away the title from those to whom the Lord has given it in his word, and to add it to any others to whom he has not given it, is so to tamper with the sacred oracles as

to become exposed to their sharpest rebuke, and so to tamper with the institutions of the ministry and the arrangements of the church as to nullify all claim to authority, if not to forfeit all title to deference and respect.

We reclaim then, from the prelates, before we enter into further argument with them as to their functions, the title which they have taken away from the pastors of the church. It must be surrendered. Whatever else they may be, they are not the bishops of the church. They are not the order so greeted by the apostle at Philippi, and so appointed elsewhere according to his instructions to Timothy and Titus. If they are a third order, they have got to find for it a scriptural designation.

If the prelates find a scriptural designation for themselves as a third order, it must of course be the designation of some office which involved the peculiar functions which they, as distinguished from the second order, the New Testament bishops, claim to exercise. This brings us to the question, What offices were there, exterior to the church at Philippi, including functions that could be occasionally employed for it, and thus supply any alleged deficiency in the completeness of its constitution, which included, in its settled framework, only the ministry of its bishops and deacons?

I. There was the apostolic office.

If the prelates are not bishops, can they take the title which belongs to this office? can they call them-

selves apostles? This question has its difficulties, but it has also its temptations. The phrase most frequently employed to express their claims is derived from this office, and betrays a longing look towards its scriptural designation, but hesitation and evasiveness as to its adoption. They are not actually apostles, but they are "*successors* of the apostles!"

Successors of the apostles! What does this hackneyed and periphrastic designation, so unlike the simple, brief, and descriptive titles given in holy Scripture, and which is adopted because no scriptural title to suit the purpose can be found, actually mean? If a king create a peer, with right to transmit his title to his descendants, the heir of the family, as he rises to wear his honours, becomes the successor of the first peer, not of the king—of him who received the title, not of him who gave it. So, if the apostles, in the plenitude of their authority, had created any order of ministers in the church, with power to perpetuate their honours and functions, those who received the entail would become the successors of the first of their order, not the successors of the apostles themselves. The first of the order, especially if they were endowed with functions which made them superior to all others, would have some appropriate title which could be easily understood and transmitted, and which none but themselves might be permitted to wear. The fact that those who claim to belong to this third order cannot find a title which has been

provided for it, but that they first go down to borrow and take away a title which belongs to others, which they *ought not to wear*, and that then they rise up and call themselves “successors” to another class, whose title they *dare not wear*, must certainly produce grave doubts as to the scriptural origin of any such order at all.

Why do the prelates *not dare* to call themselves apostles? Because, if they say we are apostles, they know they must meet the demand to show the works of an apostle—the gift of inspiration, the gift of tongues, the gift of healing, the gift of discerning spirits, the power of administering supernatural discipline. Oh, it is an easy thing! a human thing! a thing to which the most ordinary capacity is equal! to put on the mitre—to approach with measured step the throne or the altar—to stretch out the hand—to open the lips—to say, in Latin or in English, “Whose sins thou dost remit, they are remitted; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained.” The utterance may be presumption—may be delusion—may, in some circumstances, be daring impiety; but it is physically easy. Is there any demonstration of apostleship in this? A child could be trained to do it as easily as a man. But to clothe thought in new forms of language, and be plainly understood by those in whose mother-tongue you never uttered a word before—to say to the poor, impotent cripple, “In the name of Jesus of Nazareth rise up and walk,” and see his withered, crooked limbs extend to their full form,

proportions, and power—to feel the warm grasp of his hand, as he walks by your side, and tries into what new postures he can throw his recovered and elastic members—to place your hands on a faithful disciple, and convey to him the same power which you had quietly exerted yourself,—this would be superhuman—would be divine. But this would be only a small part of what apostles actually did. They had no fellowship with mitres or thrones. The solemn words in which their Divine Master gave them their high commission and exclusive authority, they never ventured to utter to others, as expressive of any endowment which they could confer ; but their shadow could heal the sick, and their voice could raise the dead. They were as full of modesty as they were of power; qualities which, in those who call themselves their successors, are sometimes lamentably reversed—for modesty, great swelling words—for calm, resistless power, the bigot's rage, employing for its vengeance the secular arm, or the empty blustering which disturbs only the air.

Successors to their office, the apostles had none. They could have none. The gift of perpetuating their own kind was not given to them—could not, from the peculiar nature of their work, be given to them. Then comes a question which the fixed laws of universal nature might be adduced to decide. If they could not propagate their own kind, could they propagate any other kind—several other kinds? And if there be any truth in the analogies

of universal nature, the whole theory of ecclesiastical generation, examined in the light of science as well as in the light of revelation, might be pronounced to be fabulous.

But it may be said, If the prelate is not an apostle, and finds it difficult to define the points at which he succeeds to apostolic functions, or to show the way by which he became possessed of them, is it not obvious that the church at Philippi, in common with other primitive churches, enjoyed an advantage in apostolic superintendence and government, for which, if you discard the prelate, no compensation can elsewhere be found?

We answer, That there are two fallacies which commonly enter into men's thoughts and reasonings on this question. First, that, when the apostles were living, every part of the church could, at all times, enjoy their superintendence. Second, that, now they are dead, no part of the church can, at any time, enjoy that superintendence.

As to the first, let it be remembered that the original number of the apostles was but twelve; and that, while the churches were multiplying in every region of the world, the apostles, instead of increasing in the same proportion, were diminishing, by death, in an inverse proportion. As to the second, let it be remembered that, in the collected epistles of the apostles, we can have more complete and abiding intercourse with them than any one church could enjoy while they were still living. Their mind in its fullest inspiration—their heaven-

directed judgment in the most difficult cases submitted to them—the light of their example in their most perfect works of faith and labours of love—are by these writings diffused through the whole church, and can be made the common property and privilege of all its members. There is nothing in the government of the church—nothing in the conduct—nothing even in the heart of its members, but may be brought at any time, at all times, to their searching words and inspired decisions. They spake in many tongues while they lived, but each one could employ only one tongue at one time. They speak in more tongues now than at Pentecost were conferred, and speak in them all at the same time. They ministered the word of Christ to many churches, as they travelled from place to place while they lived, but each one only in one assembly at one time. They minister that word now to all assemblies, however separated from each other by distance or language, as often as in such assemblies they are read. They counselled Timothy and Titus, and the elders of Ephesus, and of many other places, while they lived. They counsel every devout and faithful minister of the church now; they walk with him in all his pastoral avocations; they furnish his study with the richest treasure of which he is the steward; they direct him in all his difficulties—comfort him in all his trials—help and cheer him in all his labours. They stood not aloof, in official pomp and grandeur, from any of the flock while they were on earth. They have



become the constant friends, the bosom companions of all the instructed part of the flock now; they minister to them in the sanctuary—talk with them in the house—enter with them into the closet.

Successors of the apostles! Let the apostles themselves depart before any pretend to take their place. Alter your phraseology. Correct your thoughts of their present position, and their present work. Behold them still in the church, enthroned for instruction—for government—for judicial decision in every case. Instead of “successors,” say rather “disciples of the apostles;” and take your true position at their feet. If you think they are gone, and grope and climb to find and occupy their seat, you do but show yourselves to be the blind leaders of the blind.

There was exterior to the church at Philippi—

## II. The office of evangelist.

“He gave some apostles, and some evangelists.”\* The evangelists appear to have been companions to the apostles, and assistants in their general work. They received from the lips of the apostles, and in some instances, as in the case of Mark and Luke, compiled for the church at large the history of our Saviour. They were the messengers whom the apostles employed in their communications to churches, at times when they could not conveniently visit them, or deputies, on whom they devolved the work of completing the organization of infant churches

\* Eph. iv. 11.

when they could not tarry to finish that which they had themselves begun. They were, from the very nature of their employment, like the apostles — itinerant, and not fixed and settled. Paul gives Timothy this designation, when he charges him to “do the work of an evangelist.”\* As the work of Titus corresponded with that of Timothy, his office must have been the same. To him the apostle says, “For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee.”

We are here come to the stronghold of what is called “Diocesan Episcopacy,” by which is meant a bishop placed over others, and so exalted to form a third order, and having the exclusive power of ordination. Timothy and Titus are said to have been bishops of this order; the former having Ephesus for his diocese, the latter Crete: and they are said to have conveyed the grace of ordination, receiving it first from the apostle, and then conferring it on the elders whom they were commissioned to ordain. If this stronghold of diocesan episcopacy, with apostolical succession included in it, does not prove impregnable, then no other place of defence remains to it in the New Testament.

We have these remarks to offer, as preliminary to the principal point in the case, which relates to the power of ordination:—

1. That neither Timothy nor Titus is ever desig-

\* 2 Tim. iv. 5.

nated a bishop in the canonical and authoritative pages of the New Testament. The postscripts to their epistles are by all allowed to be legendary and spurious; and the insertion of the designation in them damages the case it is intended to help, by betraying the consciousness of weakness, and the desire to supply that which was felt to be deficient.

2. That if Timothy and Titus had previously been evangelists, which is admitted, it is not likely that, without some very urgent cause, they would have exchanged their office for one that was less important in its functions, and more limited in its sphere; nor would the apostle have commended their faithfulness, and then curtailed their charge.

3. That the apostle would not enjoin either of them to do the work of one office—that of an evangelist, while, by his own direction, he was fixed in the post of another—that of bishop.

4. That they continued to receive and obey directions from the apostle to perform itinerating labour after the work of the one at Ephesus, and of the other at Crete, had been accomplished; and therefore their work at these places, as elsewhere, must have been the temporary work of evangelists, not the fixed and permanent work of, what are called, diocesan bishops.

The office of evangelist, which Timothy and Titus did discharge, and which seems to have been so appended to the apostolic office as to have found its beginning and end in its relation to it, is not

claimed by those who profess to have discovered, in their case, the scriptural authority for their succession, and the channel through which the apostolic power of ordination was conveyed. We have removed the spurious title which had been improperly fastened upon them; we have shown their true, their scriptural rank, and work, and designation; and now there remains the most important point connected with their case to discuss, which is their alleged conveyance of the power of apostolic ordination.

Now it is a singular fact that, while Timothy was actually discharging the work of an evangelist, which office was more important in its functions and more extensive in its sphere than that which was filled by a bishop or elder residing permanently with the flock, he is expressly declared by the apostle himself to have received his ordination from the hands of those who filled the latter or inferior office. "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery."\* The elders then could and did ordain an evangelist; and the eye of the apostle himself looks so complacently on the fact as to found on it an exhortation to the evangelist.

A most important principle as to ordination is deducible from this fact, which is, that ordination is not a grace descending from a higher office to one that is lower—is not the procreation by a

\* 1 Tim. iv. 14.

prelate of something which is less than a prelate, as priest or deacon, or by the conjunction of three prelates of something which is like and equal to themselves, another prelate ; but that it is a solemn designation to office which may be performed by the elders in the appointment of one to an office higher than that which they themselves fill—the elders, or bishops, ordaining an evangelist. Does there appear anything incongruous or unseemly in this ? Look into the circumstances of the case, and all will become clear, appropriate, harmonious.

Timothy is a youth, but one of great interest and promise. His grandmother Lois, and his mother Eunice, are in reputation for their scriptural knowledge and eminent piety. Their heart has been set upon this child from his birth, and they have, by special, united, persevering prayer, devoted him to God. Their lesson-book, in his earliest instruction, has been the holy Scriptures. His profiting has appeared unto all. The eyes of the church are upon him with hope and expectation. Those who have the gift of prophecy in the church look upon him. Heavenly illumination reveals to them his future destination and course. They dwell upon it with delight ; they speak of it with the clearness and confidence which are warranted by the supernatural gift with which they are endowed. He is to be an evangelist—a companion, an assistant of some apostle. And now Paul comes into the district through which this knowledge and expectation have been diffused. The brethren at Lystra and

Iconium commend Timothy to him; and Paul looks, for the first time, on the individual who, above all others, is to be like-minded with himself—his greatest comfort in all his future and multiplying labours. The elders of the district assemble, and they lay their hands upon him. They ordain him to his office according to its prophetic indication—an evangelist. The office, it is true, is superior to that which they themselves fill; but they are the matured, some of them the aged, men, and he is, like David, when Samuel poured the anointing oil upon him, the stripling. There is nothing in the case discordant with propriety, reason, truth; but there is every thing in it against the descending procreating grace which some attribute to ordination.

How was the apostle himself employed at this time? The passage which records the case of Timothy throws some light on this question, and presents him to our view as exercised with the cares and difficulties of apostolic labour, and concerned to prepare Timothy to act on his own principle of becoming all things to all men, if by any means he might save some: “Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek: which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and *circumcised* him because of the Jews

which were in those quarters: for they all knew that his father was a Greek.”\*

The fact as to circumcision is a curious and important item in the case. If the grace of spiritual descent were claimed by virtue of the rite of circumcision, then, through this chosen channel, Timothy, the administration of that rite could be clearly traced to the apostle; but if the grace is claimed by virtue of the rite of ordination, then the administration of that rite cannot be traced to the apostle, but is by the apostle himself attributed to the presbytery.

Should it be said that the apostle's hand could join with the hands of the presbytery in the rite of ordination, and that thus its grace might be conveyed. It is admitted to be a possible case. But then, if special grace were to go from the apostle's hand, which the presbytery could not confer, and if this were to be the instance which should most clearly illustrate that grace, and show it to all generations, it was strange that he should encumber the rite with the work of hands which could contribute nothing to its efficacy. It was still more strange that Luke, guided by inspiration in writing the Acts of the Apostles, should omit to mention the point in Timothy's case which, on the assumption we are questioning, was entitled to the first consideration, and that he should carefully record a mere subordinate and prudential operation—that he should altogether omit the apostolic administra-

\* Acts xvi. 1—3.

tion of the rite of ordination, in the very case which was to furnish a scriptural model and authority for a succession which was to last through all ages, and that he should carefully record the apostolic administration of circumcision, an abrogated Jewish rite performed merely to conciliate a temporary prejudice.

Should it be said the apostle's hands must, on this, or on some other occasion, have been laid upon Timothy. We answer, we have no wish to evade the fact. We have kept it in view, and intend to put it here in its proper place, and for the completion of our argument from that which was exterior to the church at Philippi.

The presbytery, or resident bishops, could by ordination designate and set apart to office—to an office which was superior to their own; but there was one thing, very desirable in the circumstances of the primitive church, though not essential to the discharge of office, which they could not do. They could not confer supernatural endowments—miraculous gifts, as of healing or of tongues. These gifts could come only through an apostle's hands. It is natural to suppose that on proof of Timothy's excellence and profitableness to him in his work, Paul would be desirous of completing in every way his qualifications. It might be anticipated that he would make him a living epistle of himself to those to whom he would have to send him. How could this be done but by laying his own hands upon him, at some fitting and solemn season, to confer



that power of miracles which would authenticate him, as an associate and messenger of the apostle, wherever he might be sent, and on whatever mission he might be employed. The time and place at which this was done are no where recorded; but, in the second epistle written to him, Paul indulges for himself, and requires from Timothy, a complacent remembrance of the occasion when that grace was conferred: "Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands." That the gift here referred to was not office, but some special endowment which might qualify him, as the apostle himself had been qualified, for the discharge of office, is obvious from the words which follow: "For God hath not *given us* the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."\* Thus all is clear and harmonious in the case of the evangelist. He may be ordained to his office by the elders, though it is superior to that which they themselves fill. He can receive the miraculous endowments, most of all desirable for the work in which he is to be employed, only from the hands of an apostle, with whom by his office he becomes necessarily associated.

We have now surveyed the extraordinary and supernatural provision which was made for the introduction and establishment of Christianity in the world, and which was exterior to the church at

\* 2 Tim. i. 6, 7.

Philippi. We have found that the title and office of bishop was never carried out of the inclosure ; but that it was divinely appointed to those who dwelt within the limits of particular churches, and to none others. We have seen that those who claim to be a third order, with superior functions to the resident bishops, unable to discover the originals of their own class, have, “as lords over the heritage,” taken away for their own use the title of bishops from these the rightful owners, while yet they dare not wear the title of apostles, to whom they say they are the “true successors.” We have seen that the apostles did not, could not, had not need to appoint any successors to themselves; that, though dead, they still speak—they join their voices in all languages into which their words are translated, and to which the whole church is bound at all times to give heed; that, in their essential functions of instruction and government, they are still, and ever will be, with the church as the foundation on which the whole structure must rest, as the enthroned authority to which the mind of every minister, and of every member, must yield implicit subjection. We have seen that Timothy and Titus were evangelists, not bishops ; that, associated with the apostle in his labours, or acting, as occasion might require, as his deputies, their work was necessarily itinerating and temporary ; and that, instead of being the great exemplars of the grace of apostolic ordination conveyed to an endless succession, Timothy, whose case alone on

the point is recorded, received from the apostle circumcision, from the presbytery ordination, and could therefore have no grace of apostolic ordination to convey.

As the orders which we have been examining cannot, for the reasons we have shown, sustain their boasted relation to the apostolical family, so neither can they, if that would help them, prove true affinity to the more ancient Levitical family. That Aaron and Peter have no features in close resemblance to indicate a family likeness, we have, in a former lecture, sufficiently shown. If the Romanists cannot substantiate their claim to Aaron as the archetype of their *one* supreme pontiff, how are the Anglicans to make him the archetype of their order of many bishops subordinated to two or more archbishops? We leave them to dispute their respective claims to the dead body and the worn-out insignia of Aaron, while we notice, in conclusion, a fact connected with the Levitical family, when its members performed a living service, which deserves their most serious attention. That family, through all its generations, and with all its prerogatives, had no ladder constructed for them up which they might climb from order to order, and then, still higher, from degree to degree; nor did they ever venture to construct one for themselves. The Levite continued a Levite all his life long, and all his children after him in all their generations. The priest was consecrated priest at once, when he arrived at the appointed age of service, and so con-

tinued all his life, and all his children after him, in all their generations, entered and continued in the service according to the same original model. There was only one individual in a whole generation of that family who had any opportunity of rising from his first post and class of services; and he could take but one step, which was, by right of primogeniture, into the office of high priest, when death had made that office vacant.

That there was no law of Christianity requiring that the individual who had been chosen a deacon should, like the Levite, continue in his original office all the days of his life; but that a deacon might afterwards become an evangelist, as was the case with Philip, one of the seven, or that he might exchange his office for any other for which his gifts qualified him, and to which his vocation was clear, is in harmony with what we have shown, in a former lecture, to be the genius of the religion which, by the rejection of inflexible rules, and the accommodation of its worship to the most restricted limits both in numbers and circumstances, is constructed for diffusion through the world. That for a religion, so wisely and divinely simple and unencumbered in its external forms, men should have dared to make inflexible laws—that they should have bound its ministry to orders and degrees of human invention, and to progression through them, step after step, on a ladder of human construction, can never be sufficiently deprecated and deplored. One consequence has been the development, among the

so-called Christian clergy, to an extent unparalleled in the history of mankind, of that principle of our fallen humanity which wrought in the breasts of the apostles themselves, in their immature state, as they strove who should be the greatest. The checks which the Saviour put upon the kindlings of that unholy fire, to restrain and extinguish them, have been by human hands removed; the fuel, which ministers to their increase, has been, by the same hands, supplied, until a flame has been produced which showed itself pointing upwards to the meridian of the heavens, and burning downwards, through the fuel which fed it, to the lowest hell. The lust of power was the predicted apostasy in the church. The history of its clergy, in their humanly-invented orders, and their mode of progression through them, has fulfilled and embodied the prediction. The Anglican efforts, which are making to inoculate the public mind with an anti-protestant virus, are, avowedly, efforts to recover a portion of the power of the priesthood which was lost at the Reformation. Those efforts must be met by a second, a more direct, a more exclusive reference to the pages and the sole authority of the New Testament—to the law and the testimony. What saith the Scriptures? We have endeavoured to furnish a reply, on the question which relates to the orders of the Christian ministry, in presenting to the view “the saints which were in Christ Jesus at Philippi, with their bishops and deacons.”

## LECTURE IV.

“THE LAYING ON OF HANDS”—THE RITE EXPLAINED, AND ITS  
MORE FREQUENT USE ADVOCATED.

“Of laying on of hands.”—*Heb.* vi. 2.

THE laying on of hands in a religious service is, like the administering of water by the hand in baptism, a symbolic action. It has for its foundation some truth in religion, for its object the manifestation and perpetuation of that truth. There is in it a doctrine, and that doctrine, in the passage whence our text is taken, is ranged in a class with the first principles of Christian truth—with repentance, faith, baptism, the resurrection, and eternal judgment. The doctrine, if it be classed with these acknowledged fundamentals of Christianity, must be of importance. The manifestation of that doctrine, in the appointed symbolic action, must be an integral portion of the Christian economy. When the apostle wrote this epistle to the Hebrews, the doctrine and its mode of exhibition was so well understood that he had only to glance at it, and then go on to that which was less palpable—to the exposition of the higher Christian

truths which were foreshadowed in the Abrahamic covenant and the Levitical institutions.

Now it is a singular fact that the higher truths, which the apostle advanced to expound and establish, are, at present, more fully and commonly understood than is the particular truth involved in the expressive rite "of laying on of hands." We move with more freedom and intelligence amid those scenes in which God made promise to Abraham, and Melchizedek blessed him, and Aaron, springing from his loins, showed by diversified symbolic rites how all the families of the earth should at length be blessed in him, than we do amid those scenes in which the naked human hand, without rod of power or vessel of service, performed its least encumbered, yet most significant functions. We adjust our organs of vision to receive every ray of the light which is reflected upon us from the ritual of Judaism which is abolished; we close them against that which shines in a rite, which, belonging to the patriarchal, as well as to the Jewish dispensation, is not abolished, but actually incorporated with Christianity, and declared by the apostle to be among its fundamentals. To us, there is need of laying again this part of the foundation, or rather of clearing away the rubbish, which, during the dark ages of Christianity, has been gathered around it, that its true position, design, and use in the Christian church may again, as of old, appear.

We have said that the laying on of hands is a

symbolic action. An interpretation of the symbol is a necessary preliminary to the comprehension of the subject.

The hand is the operative member of the human body, by which every work of labour or skill is performed—by which every agreement and covenant in any of the relations of life is drawn up, signed, and ratified—by which all government and control is conducted—by which all kind services are performed, and all gifts are conferred. In some of the occupations and combinations of society, its importance being paramount, it is employed to represent the whole person. Thus, in a manufactory, the number of persons employed is expressed by so many hands. In the working of a vessel, the complement of the crew is the number of the hands, and when, in any sudden emergency, every man's service is required, the summons is *for all hands*. Yet is the hand only the instrument. The mind directs—the will impels and controls; and the employment of the hand, when it is free, is the outward, visible, practical expression of the mind and will. The mind conceives a work—the will determines it—the hand performs it. The hand then becomes not merely the servant, but also the *exponent* of the mind. It lays open to the view, the direction and the strength in which the mental currents flow.

Now here we have a clue to the import of the rite of laying on of hands. It is intended to lay



open and manifest the current of the mind, not indeed in any work of our own, for we make nothing, we mould nothing, we convey nothing, we alter and impress nothing, when we simply lay the hand on the head, but the current of the mind in reference to the work of another—in reference to some work which God has predetermined and intends to perform. Let God make known unto us in any way what he intends to do, in the case of one sustaining some relation to us, and let him require our concurrence in his work, and then, by laying on the hand, we declare that concurrence—we declare that, were it a work which our hand could perform, our hand should be at once employed in it; we put our hand to God's hand to show that, in the case presented to us, our mind is in harmony with God's mind—that, in submission, approval, complacence, if it might be, co-operation, we are one with him. Here, I apprehend, is the doctrine which is embodied in the rite of laying on of hands. We shall find it pervading, as the animating, informing spirit, every case recorded in holy Scripture in which the rite was performed. It is the key which will be found to unlock the subject, and give us the easy range and command of all its contents.

Let us use the key, and open the cases in the order in which they are recorded, as presented in the three successive dispensations of religion which God has established in our world—the patriarchal—the Jewish—the Christian.

## I. The patriarchal.

It may be necessary to premise that those whom we term the patriarchs were the ministers of religion in their day—that, amid the secular occupation of shepherds, rich in flocks, which they tended, they discharged a threefold religious office—that they were prophets, priests, and kings. They discharged the regal office, in ruling their immense households for religious purposes, fencing off idolatry, and enjoining on all its members the worship of the true God. They discharged the priestly office, in offering the appointed sacrifices, and conducting every service of the altar, which was always found, or reared, by them in every place where they pitched their tents. “And when they went from one nation to another, from one kingdom to another people, he suffered no man to do them wrong : yea, he reprov’d kings for their sakes, saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my *prophets* no harm.”

It is in the discharge of this last-mentioned office, as prophet, that our attention must now be directed to Jacob, performing the rite of laying on of hands.

“And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand towards Israel’s left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand towards Israel’s right hand, and brought them near unto him. And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim’s head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh’s head, guiding his hands

wittingly, for Manasseh was the first-born. And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth. And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him: and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head. And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father: for this is the first-born; put thy right hand upon his head. And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it: he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations. And he blessed them that day, saying, In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh: and he set Ephraim before Manasseh.”\*

There are indubitable indications that the scene described in this passage was one in which there was a special bestowment of the prophetic spirit upon the mind of the patriarch. Joseph, who was conversant in his own experience with the modes in which the visitations of prophetic grace came down upon the human spirit, recognized its pres-

\* Gen. xlviii. 13—20.

ence here, and expressed his conviction and emotion by the reverent attitude which he assumed, bowing himself before his father, with his face to the earth, that he might thus listen to the utterance of his lips, while his sons are placed, the eldest towards Jacob's right hand, and the youngest towards his left. The studied, though inconvenient, crossing of the hands of the venerable patriarch, so that the right hand should find the head of the younger, and the left hand be directed to the head of the elder, and his refusing to permit another disposition to take place, show a corresponding impression on his own mind, and prepare us for the clear and penetrating glancings into the far-distant future which follow. The relative position which the descendants of Joseph, in both branches of his lineage, should occupy among the tribes, the form of speech in which future generations should express their kindest thoughts and feelings towards one another, "God make thee as Ephraim and Manassch," rise distinctly before the prophet's mind, and mark the season as one in which he is divinely inspired to behold and speak of things which are not as though they were.

The prophetic nature of this communication from Jacob to the sons of Joseph should be specially marked, that it may divest the mind of every superficial conception of the case, as though Jacob had conveyed a blessing which was in his own gift to these his descendants. The true state of the

case is this: the eye of Jacob is supernaturally enlightened to read God's thoughts and purposes towards these sons of Joseph—to see how he determined and delighted to multiply, to honour, and to bless them. The rich fountain of the blessing was God's favour to them. From his love the stream of blessing flowed forth, and was to continue deepening and widening as one generation should succeed another. The work of Jacob's hands, consentaneous with that of his lips, was designed to make manifest his delight in the visions of the future which he beheld, and his desire, by every link which his humanity could supply, to connect himself with the heirs of the blessings he foretold.

The prophetic vision must have been peculiarly exhilarating to the mind of Jacob. He remembered all his mournings and reasonings on the loss of Joseph. He remembered how all his hopes for the future, in that line in which they had opened most brightly, and his fond heart had most loved to cherish them, had been cut off and turned into bitterness. He had heard the recital of the youthful dreams. He had indulged anticipations of coming greatness to his favourite son. These visions of glory had departed, and had left nothing behind but the fragments of the coat of many colours, and painful ruminations as to the nature, and haunts, and destructive work of the beast which was supposed to have drunk the blood, and devoured the body of his child. Now the end was

again harmoniously united to the beginning. Now the long interval of darkness and sorrow had prepared for the fuller enjoyment of restored and augmented light and joy. Now the things which he had despondingly said to have been all against him were seen to have been all working for him. Now carnal nature, in its reasonings and anticipations having been crucified, renovated and purified nature, is supernaturally exalted to a region of clearer, purer light, to a more commanding eminence, and a more extensive survey. Had Jacob's own views been consulted, and his own arrangements permitted, he would have given to Joseph a goodly portion of his own substance, and thus have contributed to his influence among his brethren. But God took the case into his own hand, and made Joseph independent of Jacob his father, who too fondly loved him, as well as of his brethren who had hated him. He made him the benefactor and saviour of the whole family, and now opened to the eye of Jacob, in that line, a vision of what his own hand of blessing intended to bestow, far beyond any expectations which Jacob could previously have formed, thus doing for him exceeding abundantly above all he could ask or think.

We need not wonder that Jacob's mind expanded in this direction to comprehend the mind of God—that it delighted to express its concurrence with the mind of God—that the hands, now too feeble to labour, and too empty to convey any benefaction which Joseph in his exaltation could need or desire

to receive, were gladly stretched out, and laid on the heads of Ephraim and Manasseh, to show how God would accomplish that which Jacob had the desire, but not the power, himself to perform. Here, then, in the laying on of Jacob's hands, there is before us God's predetermined work of blessing in the line of Joseph's sons, and Jacob's entire and joyful concurrence in that work,—the prophet's hands are laid on to indicate his knowledge of God's intended work of blessing, while his lips give utterance, in the words of blessing, to the mind, which, in its own reception of heavenly light and love, is brought into harmony and oneness with the mind of God.

The part which Joseph took in this scene, reverently disposing his children so that the one might stand conveniently for the right hand and the other for the left hand of his father, seems to indicate a compliance with an accustomed form of procedure, as though the laying on of hands were the established, and well understood, mode of making manifest, in connection with prophetic foresight, the blessings which God intended to bestow on individuals and their descendants. We can easily conceive of Melchizedek, accompanying with this rite of manual imposition the blessing which he pronounced on Abraham; and of Isaac, accompanying with this rite the blessing he pronounced on Jacob when he sent him away to Padan-aram. Men of profound thought and elevated piety, who conversed with God, and received from him enlarged bestowments of the prophetic spirit, when,

by heavenly inspiration, their minds were filled with light, their hearts with love, their tongue about to speak in blessing, could find no action better fitting their thoughts and words than the laying on of hands. In this rite the impulses of their physical nature would be in harmony with their moral feelings, their cherished remembrances, their most venerable and authoritative examples. Among the first principles of the patriarchal religion would be the doctrine—among the frequently recurring rites would be the practice, of laying on of hands.

The records we possess of the patriarchal dispensation, although that dispensation includes a period of two thousand five hundred years, and the history runs on from the beginning to the end, are yet exceedingly brief. We have found, however, a case in these brief records so fully and explicitly related as to indicate that it was intended to present, to all generations, an impressive specimen of the performance of a rite of frequent occurrence in those early times, when simplicity, sincerity, and full-hearted kindness characterized the intercourse with their fellow-men of those whom God endowed with prophetic gifts. One effect of this relation is, that we too exclusively associate the laying on of hands with patriarchal feelings and patriarchal times. We think it has been given for more general and permanent uses. It has led us into the heart of our subject, and placed us on an eminence from which we may survey the whole field which



lies before us, and easily move to the different points we may have to examine as, in turn, they present themselves to our view. We take next in order the illustrations which offer in—

## II. The Jewish dispensation.

It must be premised here that, though the national priesthood of Aaron superseded, among the tribes of Israel, the family priesthood of the patriarchs, yet Judaism, as a system, did not abolish any of the rites of the patriarchal religion. It rather expanded for a nation, in its multiplied relations and power of combination, that which had been previously adapted for the narrow confines of a household. Each household too, as one had succeeded another, had been the household of one of the fathers. Every name which had been recorded was endeared, for all were bound to it by the ties of kindred. Every rite which had been recorded was venerable, for it had given expression to the devout feelings of patriarchal ancestors. If the name and example of Jacob have so much influence with us, in this distant part of the world, and remote period of time, and as we look towards it over an intervening dispensation with its lengthening catalogue of illustrious worthies, how much more among his immediate descendants, in the midst of the scenes to which he refers, and in the enjoyment of the blessings which his impassioned language describes and assures. The form of blessing which he left for his descendants, “In thee shall Israel

bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and Manasseh," would not lie obsolete and forgotten, as in a neglected and musty record, but, frequently read in their living oracles, and brief, emphatic, and convenient for use, would express the yearning feelings of many a parental heart ; while, in the solemn exercises of the prayer of faith, which ever becomes prophetic of promised blessings, there would often be the accompanying and appropriate rite—the laying on of hands.

The first recorded case, however, connected with the Jewish dispensation, is the ordination of the Levites, as a tribe, for the work of their service:

“ And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take the Levites from among the children of Israel, and cleanse them. And thus shalt thou do unto them to cleanse them : sprinkle water of purifying upon them, and let them shave all their flesh, and let them wash their clothes, and so make themselves clean. Then let them take a young bullock with his meat-offering, even fine flour mingled with oil, and another young bullock shalt thou take for a sin-offering. And thou shalt bring the Levites before the tabernacle of the congregation : and thou shalt gather the whole assembly of the children of Israel together : and thou shalt bring the Levites before the Lord : and the children of Israel *shall put their hands upon the Levites* : and Aaron shall offer the Levites before the Lord, for an offering of the children of Israel, that they may execute the service of the Lord.” \*

\* Numb. viii. 5—11.

This rite of ordination was in all probability performed, not by every individual of the Levitical tribe having laid upon his head the hands of a proportional number of the members of the other tribes, for this, though not an impossible, would have been a very difficult, tedious, and unedifying arrangement, but by a mutual representation. The Levites, ranged according to their families, and previously purified, both in their flesh and their raiment, so as to be ready for immediate service, are convened in the presence of their brethren, who compose the other tribes — “the whole assembly of the children of Israel.” Chosen representatives from both parties come forth from their respective bodies. The hands of those who represent the larger body, the tribes, are laid upon the heads of those who represent the smaller body, the families. God has selected this tribe in its families for the service of his sanctuary. He requires from the people a concurrence in his choice. Their will is to be one with his will. That it is so is to be declared by their hand, in this work of separating and devoting the Levites to their service, going with his hand. That which is done for them, in their presence, and by the representatives which they themselves have chosen, is considered their own act and deed. The popular mind and will is thus concentrated, manifested, expressed, by the popular hand. Three things are seen in beautiful harmony. God’s will, appointing the Levites to their enjoined service. The Levites’ will—they are purified, and ready for the discharge of their

appointed service. The people's will—their hands, if not permitted to perform the work connected with the vessels, and furniture, and varied materials of the sanctuary, are upon the heads of those who are called to the service ; and thus solemnly and appropriately is their entire concurrence proclaimed.

We need not wonder that those, who build their official pretensions so loftily on Levitical institutions, should shun acquaintance with the case we have now presented ; yet it has special claims on attention, from the position which it occupies at the foundation. It is a fundamental case in two senses. It is the ordination of the whole tribe of Levi which it presents, and it is the first case, recorded in holy Scripture, of ordination *to any office* by the laying on of hands. The hands employed, however, are not the hands of the high priest, nor of those who were priests in common, nor even of elder brethren elected from the Levites themselves, but the hands of the people. We have shown, in the preceding lecture, that the elders could ordain an evangelist—that those who filled a subordinate office could ordain to an office higher than their own. In this case, in order of time the first of all cases, we see that those who have no office can ordain, not individuals merely, but a whole tribe, previously purified and sprinkled, and just ready for every part of their work, to their entire office.

There need be no apprehension that, in exposing the absurdities of one theory as to ordination, we are about to advocate extreme opinions in the opposite

direction, by constructing another theory to confront it. We only wish the folly of hunting for Levitical analogies, to sustain doubtful claims made in connection with the Christian ministry, to be rebuked and discountenanced. If the advocates of these claims will persist in this mode of argumentation, then we have a right to demand that they take the Levitical family as it was, and Levitical analogies as a whole ; and then, in view of the case before us, we send all who are to sustain the lower orders of their ministry, and as none can get to the higher without advancing through the lower, every individual who is pretending to holy orders, not to the hands of the bishop for ordination, but to the unofficial hands of the people.

To restore the equipoise of our subject, and guide us towards a middle path, the path of safety, we take from the Jewish records another case of ordination to office, by the laying on of hands, in which Moses, the Jewish lawgiver, only is employed. If, however, the hands of only one individual are employed, the ordination itself is, according to the rule we advocated in our last lecture, not by steps of progression, and successive acts of imposition, but to the perfect office, though it was the highest which Joshua ever filled, or could fill, at once, and by one act of imposition.

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and *lay thine hand upon him*; and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give

him a charge in their sight. And thou shalt put some of thine honour upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient. And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the Lord: at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation. And Moses did as the Lord commanded him: and he took Joshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation: *and he laid his hands upon him*, and gave him a charge, as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses.”\*

The hand of Moses had put all the honour of Aaron the high priest upon Eleazar, when, in Mount Hor, he transferred the pontifical garments, one by one, from the father to the son—it could only put some of the honour of his own office upon Joshua. The design, in the former instance, was to show the continuance of an office strictly defined, and permanent in its functions and minutest ceremonial services. Eleazar, therefore, came to the people in the very same vestments and insignia in which Aaron had left them. The only difference they saw in the person of their priest, when the office had been transferred, was, that another and less venerable countenance beamed forth from these insignia upon them. The only difference they found in the performance of the accustomed service was that another and less familiar voice uttered the unaltered words of the

\* Numb. xxvii. 18—23.

concluding blessing. The design in the latter instance was different. The office of Moses was not to be perpetuated, and therefore no insignia were appointed to it. In the more important parts and functions of his office, Moses, like the apostles, could have no successor. There could not be a second commission to redeem the tribes from the bondage of Egypt. There could not be a second lawgiver to receive and deliver to the people the tables written with the finger of God, or the pattern after which the tabernacle was to be constructed, or the statutes at large, uttered as when a man speaks with his fellow-man, face to face. It was a captain, to lead the people into the promised land, and endowed for the purpose with miraculous powers, which was now needed. To this office Joshua was ordained by Moses, and some of the honour only which Moses had possessed was put upon him.

The hands which were laid upon Joshua, in the presence of all the congregation, though they gave only a portion of honour, were wonderful hands. A hundred and twenty years before, they had been seen by the eye of Pharaoh's daughter feeling, in vain, around the little ark of bulrushes for the accustomed shelter and nurture of the maternal breast, while the tears, like dew drops, stood upon the lovely face, moving her heart to pity. They had been trained and exercised in all the manipulations of Egyptian art and science, and taught how they might wield a sword and grasp a sceptre. They had been employed with Jethro in all the laborious avocations

of his pastoral life, drawing the water, and tending the flock. They had borne, from the guidance and rule of the flock, a rod which had become more potent than Pharaoh's sceptre. They had been with God in all his signs in Egypt and miracles in the wilderness. They had been held up in prayer during the conflict with the Amalekites. They had been faithful and diligent in all the singularly diversified works which had been assigned to them. They had gathered all the honour which they now held, and carried with them, from the service of God. They had been working for God, and with God, in the accomplishment of his purposes of mercy, and in the cause of his church and people. And now, while they rest upon the head of Joshua, there are visions of transcendant prophetic glory opening to the view, as there are words of solemn and weighty prophetic injunction dropping from the lips. The purposes of God are seen hastening to their accomplishment. Into the land, which Moses himself might only behold from the distant mountain, the feet of Joshua are to enter, leading the tribes victorious. From Pisgah he can only behold the land itself, in the beauty and sublimity of its scenery, and the richness and abundance of its fruits ; but, while his hands are upon the head of Joshua, and the whole congregation is, as with one mind, fixed in its gaze, and listening to his charge, he sees the people who are to spread themselves over that scenery—who are to feast on those



fruits—who are to inherit the blessings of Jacob, long delayed, but now, like the stream which has been gathering depth and fulness behind some obstruction, just ready so much the more copiously to descend—who are to fill the land with their deeds of renown, and make its hills and valleys vocal with their praise. It requires great submission from Moses that he is to have no share in reaping the harvest of all his previous toil. He feels the fire and energy of his youth burning with undiminished force in his aged and venerable frame as this inviting and invigorating prospect opens before him; but he keeps his hands on Joshua's head, and continues and completes his charge, in token of his restrained feelings of subjection to God, and entire concurrence in the choice he has made of the instrument by which the glorious work is to be completed. Since his own hands may not plant the standard of his tribe on the other side of the Jordan, nor put up the first pillar of the tabernacle, to which all the rest may be attached, at Shiloh, nor gather a bunch of the grapes of Esheol, he lays them on the head of Joshua, to give him a portion of the honour which had gathered round his own office, for the completion of the work to which his own life had been devoted, and which he had once fondly hoped himself to finish; and for declaring that his will was with God's will in the appointment of Joshua, and his hands, in their last solemn official act, with God's hand to fulfil the promises made to Abraham.

We must not leave the Jewish dispensation without glancing at the extensive practice of laying on of hands in connection with sacrificial services.

When an individual brought a sin-offering, he laid his hand upon the head of the victim before it was slain, to indicate that, in obedience to Divine command, he transferred his sin to the appointed sacrifice. When the sin was some public transgression, in which the people generally were implicated, the elders of the congregation, as representatives of the body, laid their hands upon the victim, to express the concurrence of the whole in the sacrificial expiation. But the most impressive performance of this rite, connected with Levitical sacrifices, was reserved for the annual day of atonement. On that day, the goat, on which the lot fell to be the "scape-goat," was placed in the presence of the people, while Aaron, arrayed in his holy garments, in which he had gone before the mercy-seat and sprinkled the blood of the sin-offering, thus completed the work of putting away sin: "And Aaron *shall lay both his hands* upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness."

Looking superficially at these cases, we see no hand but the hand of man employed. Whether it be

the high priest on the day of atonement, or the elder as the representative of the congregation, or the individual bringing his own sacrifice, *he* lays his hand upon the victim—puts sin upon him—sends him away, or devotes him to die.

But what is the victim so devoted? A typical sacrifice offered by Divine appointment, and that appointment involving and indicating an ulterior purpose. It is a symbolic prediction of what God intends to perform in the gift and atoning sacrifice of his Son. Let the eye look at the scene in God's light, and it beholds in one and all of these offerings for sin "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Let the ear listen to the confession and announcement of the evangelical prophet, and God's work is seen to have preceded man's. "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way; *and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*" When viewed in their proper light, then God is seen in these sacrifices unfolding his purposes of mercy—providing the lamb for the offering—making him sin for us; and man's hand here also is the penitential and believing expression of his concurrence in God's work—in that work which most deeply concerns himself, the putting away of his sins. When our minds are enlightened, and our own devotional exercises those which God requires, so fully do we enter into the case that we involuntarily clothe our thoughts in language borrowed from the ancient sacrificial rites, and, as though we saw the victim before us, and could take

part in the work of putting our sin upon him, we sing—

“My faith would *lay her hand*  
On that dear head of thine,  
While, like a penitent, I stand,  
And there confess my sin.”

The presentation of the sacrifice always preceded the bestowment of blessing from God. When his truth and justice, in the punishment of sin, had been made manifest in the sufferings and death of the appointed, but innocent victim, he could smile in favour on the penitent, and declare his love in words of promise and blessing. The blessing, therefore, concluded the sacrificial service. To pronounce it was the pleasant work of the priest who had officiated in the offering of the sacrifice. When the design for which the tribe of Levi was separated from the other tribes is referred to, this is emphatically and repeatedly mentioned as prominent—to bless in my name. The form of blessing is given: “On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. And they shall *put my name* upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them.”\*

The high priest put the sins of the people upon the “scape-goat” by the laying on of his hands. He could not in the same way put the name of God upon

\* Numb. vi. 23—27.

the whole people in pronouncing the blessing. The goat was one, the people a multitude. But he employed, doubtless by Divine direction, in which the promptings of his own nature led him cheerfully to concur, a mode which came as near to the laying on of hands as the circumstances of the case would permit: "And Aaron *lifted up his hand toward the people*, and blessed them."

When the blessing was to be pronounced on an individual, there would be no difficulty in the actual contact of the hand with the party who had brought the sacrifice; and as the party would lay his hand upon the head of the victim, thus declaring his concurrence in the will of God, who had appointed this mode of propitiation, so, the required rites having been gone through, the priest would lay his hand upon the head of the offerer while he pronounced the blessing, thus declaring his concurrence in the propitiated favour of Deity towards him. In this way would he make it manifest that he entered into the spirit of the office, which, as the end and consummation of its work, was "to put God's name upon his people, and to bless in that name."

These offerings by individuals would be of daily occurrence, and many on every day. To officiate in their presentation would be, as to the amount of their labour, the principal part of the work of the priests in their courses. The people would thus become familiar with the form and the words of the blessing. They would connect the religion which Moses brought them from the mount of communion with

that which their patriarchal fathers professed in the days of their pilgrimage. They would find it animated by the same spirit, and, at the point which most deeply interested their feelings, clothed with the same forms. The blessings which God declared his purpose to bestow in the promises made to their fathers—the blessings which the prophetic minds of their fathers had rejoiced to foresee as they laid their hands upon their children—those blessings came to the people, now multiplied into a nation, in forms which linked the past with the present, in the services, and with the manifested concurrence of those whom God had appointed to bless in his name, as that name was put upon them by the appropriate rite “of laying on of hands.”

Having thus illustrated the doctrine of laying on of hands, by an examination of the rite, as it was performed under the two preceding dispensations of religion, let us now bind the case into a threefold cord, by an examination of the rite, as it is recorded in the New Testament, which brings us—

### III. To the Christian dispensation.

Here we immediately behold and connect ourselves with Christ as a Son over his own house, whose house are we. He goes before us in every act of obedience, fulfilling all righteousness. He gives grace and beauty, as well as authority, to whatever he commends to us, by embodying it in his own personal experience and perfect work. How varied and multiplied were the works and ministra-

tions which his own hands, blessed and conferring blessings, performed! There is no class of services which men render to one another of which he did not cheerfully and gracefully give the example. In the skill of mechanical operations—in kind and gentle appliances to sickness and disease—in supplying the multitude with food—in washing his disciples' feet—he condescended to the wants and necessities of the nature which he had taken into union with the Divine, and, by the work of his own hands, redeemed from the scorning of the proud every honest occupation to which the laborious human hand can be applied.

In the work “of laying on of hands” he takes the pre-eminence, both in the number and in the varied application, of the cases in which it was performed. The links which connect the different parts of our subject, and combine them into one complete and harmonious whole, will be most clearly seen if we first select the well known case, recorded by three of the evangelists, of his blessing little children. A light from this case shines back upon the obscurer parts of the path we have traced through Judaism, as well as onward in the course we are now contemplating through Christianity. It is indeed the border land of the two dispensations, where they meet, not as opposing sides of divided empires, sustaining the wall, which frowns on both and forbids intercourse, but, as in the open pleasant fields, common to both, where the river passes from one territory to another, pouring the riches which it brings

from the one into the other, freely, copiously, and still to roll onward in a widening and deepening channel.

“Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should *put his hands* on them and pray.” How came the desire into the minds of those who brought them that *his hands* should be so employed? There had been no prescription from his own lips as to the particular form in which he should be solicited to manifest his condescension and favour. It was the spontaneous desire of those who came to him with a case which his disciples thought beyond or below the range of his consideration. The desire must have arisen out of practices well known and familiar. Those who felt and expressed it must have carried into the Saviour’s presence associations which they had derived from other scenes. They had been accustomed to witness the laying on of hands in official and devotional services. It had given emphasis and impression to the words which had been uttered. They were desirous of seeing the same combination of word and symbolic action in the benediction now sought for these children. Greater force will be given to this view of the case if we remember that, as the children brought to the Saviour were infants, the probability is that they were brought by their mothers; and maternal feelings are influenced by association, precedents, customs in religion, not by inquiries into new regions of thought, leading onward to change and reformation.

It is expressly recorded that the Saviour com-



plied with the request as to “the laying on of hands:” “He took them up in his arms, *put his hands upon them*, and blessed them.” What was the value of the blessing which he bestowed? To his eye the whole future was open, stretching onward through time into eternity. To his hand all the elements of blessing were subservient, submissive, co-operative. They would come, they would abide, they would conmingle, they would work together at his bidding. Is it too much to suppose that they did come on the heads of these children—that they remained in their wisely diversified combination through all the stages of their earthly existence—that they followed them onward in their passage from time to eternity, and constitute now the rich inheritance of their immortal existence? “Of such is the kingdom of heaven,” was his declaration. His blessing would certainly reach as far, and comprehend as much, as the words of his lips and the glancing of his eye. And with the blessings of earth and heaven, of time and eternity, open to his view, his compliance with accustomed forms would not be in the spirit of accommodation merely, but of approbation and confirmation—the sanction of his own example—the cordial appropriate employment of a member of his own human body in the work of benediction. He took the rite of laying on of hands, which his brethren, according to the flesh, had received from their patriarchal ancestors—which had been embodied in such beautiful and instructive forms in the offices of their priesthood—which had doubtless given impressive-

ness to their more social or domestic exercises of religion, when those engaged in them, whose piety was matured by age, and whose faith gave to fervent lips the clearness and power of a prophetic strain—he took this rite, and placed it among the fundamentals of his own spiritual and heavenly religion.

It would occupy too much time to go through the cases in which he healed the sick by the laying on of hands. One may be selected, which shines conspicuously above the rest. The scene is Capernaum, in this connection a city set upon a hill. The light which shines from it is concentrated in one verse; but that one verse enshrines the whole city in a halo of glory, which can never pass away—a glory brighter than the sun of nature gave, as it was setting, when, from Peter's humble dwelling in this city, "the Sun of righteousness shone out with healing under his wings."

"Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them."

It was a Sabbath-day. He had healed a demoniac in the synagogue at the morning service, and in the presence of the assembly. The fame of the work had spread through the city, and become the theme of conversation in every circle and in every family. He had retired, not unattended, into Simon's house. It is full of sorrow and alarm. Simon's wife's mother is prostrate under the deadly power of a raging fever. He takes her by the

hand, and the contact instantaneously regulates the ungovernable pulse—removes the dry and burning heat—infuses perfect health and vigour into the whole frame. She arises and ministers to the household and the guests. The fame of this miracle travels on the footsteps of that which had gone before, and confirms the hopes which had been raised in the chambers of disease, and the purposes which had been formed by relatives and friends to bear the sick, to whom they minister, into his presence. But while the hours of the Sabbath continue, they fear to put their hands to the burden of the work, lest, by transgressing the law, they should place a moral obstacle in the way of his healing power. The first rays of the morning sun were never waited for, by benighted traveller, with more eager and anxious feelings than is the departure of the sun now longed for by the sick in every part of Capernaum. Their impatience cannot be restrained until it has entirely disappeared. While it is setting—so soon as its lower edge has touched the western horizon, there is brought forth on beds and litters, prepared for the burden, the sick from every house. Every party moves, under the exciting influence of one common sympathetic impulse, towards the one centre of attraction in the house of Peter, and, at length, “the whole city is gathered together at the door.” The Saviour comes forth. There is before his eye the manifold forms of disease and suffering to which our fallen humanity is subject, gathered into one place of assembly ;

while round each one of the couches are those who have ministered to the sick upon them, and have suffered with them in the sympathies of their kindred hearts, pleading with countenances as expressive as the longing upraised looks of the diseased themselves. His eye affects his heart. He can feel no plea more powerfully than that which yearns in his own perfect and susceptible humanity. He has taken the sickness of each one more fully into his own heart than it had ever gone into the heart of those who had most closely watched its progress, soothed its sufferings, and administered its medicinal appliances. And now he can remove these sicknesses from his own heart only by the condescending employment of his own hands. He gives no commission to others, as when he brake the bread for the multitude, though the twelve are now, as then, around him. Each of the victims of disease is to have the healing virtue by the laying on of his own hands.

What order did he take in communicating the blessing? Did he go first to the bed nearest to him as he came forth from the house, and looked on the assemblage of sorrowful patients? or, did he first select the case which was most desperate and urgent, where death seemed struggling with its victim, as though eager to secure its prey before the power of the Saviour arrived to rescue? Did he again manifest his love to childhood by first attending to the pining suckling, held out to him by the arms of its earnest and imploring mother?

or, did he show his respect for hoary hairs by first restoring health to the countenance wrinkled with age, as well as haggard with disease?

Whatever order he took in the work before him, so soon as any one had felt the healing influence of the imposition of his hands, and rose up full of wonder and joy at recovered health and power, a new impulse, desire, and expectation would spread with electric rapidity through the whole assembly, and the first sound of grateful exclamation and acknowledgment, from newly opened lips, be the key-note of the full chorus of thanksgiving into which the whole multitude would be preparing to break forth. Capernaum was then exalted to heaven, and that Sabbath closed upon them as one of the days of heaven upon earth. Its inhabitants at large saw the brightest illustration which had been given, and those among them who had been sick became living joyful witnesses, to the gracious power connected with the laying on of the Saviour's hands.

If Aaron, when lifting up his hand toward the people to put God's name upon them, and to bless them in that name, may be considered as performing a symbolic action of the same import to the multitude as, to an individual, was the laying on of hands, then is there a corresponding scene, in the closing intercourse of the Saviour with his disciples, which demands our special attention.

“And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And it

came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven."

He had now performed the suffering part of his priestly work. He had made a complete atonement for sin, and he seemed concerned to make the hour of separation, to which his disciples had been accustomed to look forward with apprehension and sorrow, as bright and joyful to them as it was to himself. He accomplished this by the mode in which he departed from them. While his hands are lifted up in the attitude of blessing, and the words of blessing are dropping from his lips, the softened splendours of Deity irradiate his whole humanity, and give an unutterable expression of complacency and love to every feature of his countenance; as though the celestial impress of his immortal glory were given to him at that moment to perpetuate the form, the feelings, the accents in which he blessed his disciples. As this was the last, so was it the brightest, the dearest, the deepest impression of his personal appearance which they had ever received. While they were receiving it, their capacity for blessedness obtained an expansion which it had never before reached, and their emotions towards the Saviour rose to an elevation of adoring love beyond all former instances in their experience. Conversation, however unreserved and endeared, would now have been too cold and equal. Their hearts, perhaps for the first time, yielded to impulses more like those which fill angelic breasts while they behold and serve him. "*They wor-*

*shipped* him, and returned to Jerusalem with *great joy*, and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God."

They saw him go up to heaven in the attitude of blessing, as though he were immortalized in the act. The two men in white apparel, who stood by them as they gazed after him, said to them, "This same Jesus shall *so come* in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." The two widely distant points, as to time, are then to be connected together by the same common characteristics. He departed in the act of blessing. He will return to complete and consummate the blessing, by presenting the whole church, in the manifestation of all the blessings it will have received, "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." The whole intervening period is, like the point from which it starts, in which it ends, a time of blessing—an accepted time—the day of salvation. So that, could his hand become visible to any who call upon him for salvation, it would be, like the hand of the priest who had offered the sacrifice and finished the rites for atonement, stretched out to bless. Thus did it become visible to John in the apocalypse: "He laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not." In this case the laying on of hands receives illustration from the Saviour's work in heaven, as well as from his work on earth. The symbolic description of his heavenly glory is not complete without this imposition of his hand. Our conceptions of his employment for us in heaven,

and our anticipations of his second coming, are then most accordant with truth, as well as most cheering to our minds, when they rise with him from Bethany in his work of benediction. When we look to the lamb of God, devoted to death for our sins, we may sing,—

“My faith would lay *her* hand  
On that dear head of thine.”

When we look to the priest, after the order of Melchizedek, upon the throne, we may see *his* right hand laid on our head to bless us. It is the work of faith thus to enjoy, in its highest form of privilege, the laying on of hands. Faith can appropriate the grace of baptism in the absence of the material rite, so, in like manner, may it appropriate the grace of the rite which the apostle associates with it—“Of the doctrine of *baptisms*, and of laying on of hands.”

But, in these illustrations of the rite of laying on of hands which we have taken from the Saviour's history, do we not lose sight of that which we stated to be the doctrine involved in the rite—the concurrence of the human mind and will with the mind and will of God, in some way intimated to us? So far from this being the case, it is in the Saviour's work that this doctrine is most clearly seen and taught. His work on earth was a revealing of the Father to us, and a manifestation of the entire concurrence of his perfect humanity in the whole of God's will and conduct towards us: “I came from heaven, not to do my own will, but the



will of him that sent me.” “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.” “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” “The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself, but of the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.” The healing touch, then, was not from the inherent virtue of his human hand, any more than it could be from ours. It was the power of Deity, mysteriously united with his humanity, which accomplished the wonders he performed; which wonders were therefore sometimes effected without the movement of the hand, or even the utterance to the sufferer of the voice. And when the hand was employed, it was, like the rod of Moses, the visible token of the Divine power, and the instrument by which that power performed its works—the member of the Saviour’s human body by which, even when no words were uttered, he declared his concurrence with his Father’s will to heal and bless those who came, or who were brought to him.

We are now prepared, by an enlarged and comprehensive view of the general subject, to discuss that particular branch of it which relates to apostolic usages. This particular branch has too commonly been considered as the whole of the case with which we have any concern. The part, detached from the whole, and gathering to itself the nourishment which should have been diffused equally through the whole, has grown into a monstrous excrescence on the fair form of Christianity; and

some, shocked by the disfigurement which has been produced, would inconsiderately amputate not only the excrescence, but the member itself out of which it has grown—would altogether remove from the first principles of the doctrine of Christ that which relates to the laying on of hands. Let wiser counsels prevail. A patient hand, with no very great demand upon its skill, may remove the excrescence without mutilating the form of Christianity, or even leaving an unsightly cicatrice to offend the eye.

The cases in question, connected with apostolic usages, divide themselves into three classes. The laying on of hands—in healing the sick—in setting apart to any special work or office—in the bestowment of spiritual gifts.

### I. In healing the sick.

“They *shall lay hands* on the sick, and they shall recover.” This manual imposition in the miracles of healing was to be the rule of procedure, although, as in the work of the Lord himself, other modes might present the exception. “Peter’s shadow falling on the sick,” “and handkerchiefs and aprons taken from the body of Paul,” might each, on a special occasion, prove efficacious; but the general rule is confirmed by the emphatic statements of the record, that, “by *the hands* of the apostles, many signs and wonders were done amongst the people.”

It must here be remembered that the apostles decisively disclaimed the virtue of healing by their “own power or holiness;” that the name of Jesus

was the invocation which they employed; and that, while uttering with earnest faith and deep solemnity his sacred name, they distinctly realized his presence and power working by them. "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk." "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole."

We have said that faith can appropriate the grace of the hand laid on to bless, as it can appropriate the grace of baptism, in the absence of the visible and material rite. There is a singular illustration of the operation of faith, in connecting the Divine agent with the human recipient—in giving definite form to the infinite power, and appropriate action to the invisible hand, contained in a brief apostolic prayer connected with our present subject: "And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, *by stretching forth thine hand to heal*; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus."

We are not to suppose that miracles of healing were wrought by the apostles at their own will, or that the gift they possessed, and were empowered to confer on others, was, either in the original or imparted case, under self-control. Timothy was subject to frequent infirmities, for which a more generous diet was prescribed. Epaphroditus had

been sick nigh unto death, and Trophimus was left by Paul, at Miletus, sick. It was not for their personal exemption from the maladies to which our nature is subject, nor even for their personal convenience in the prosecution of their arduous labours that the gifts of healing were bestowed, but for evidence and proof of their Divine mission. In every case in which the gift was exercised, it was doubtless under an impression as clear, distinct, and powerful as though they saw the finger of God pointing to the object, and the hand of God stretched out to rest upon him. Their hand then followed with trembling awe, inspired by feeling that God was waiting to make it the token of his present power, and the instrument of his own glory. His hand went before theirs in the intimation of his intended work opened clearly to their eye of faith. Their hand came to his in manifestation of their faith—their obedience—the oneness of their mind, and will, and hand with his.

## II. In setting apart to any special work or office.

Four cases will fairly and fully represent all that can be derived from the Acts and Epistles of the apostles, on this, the vital point of the whole question.

1. A case in which there is a setting apart to a special work, by the laying on of hands, no new office being contemplated in the manual imposition: “Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas,

and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, *and laid their hands on them*, they sent them away.”\*

2. A case in which seven individuals are set apart to the office of deacon: “And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, *they laid their hands on them.*”†

3. A case in which a youth of great promise is set apart to the office of evangelist: “Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.”‡

4. A case in which the evangelist is assumed to have the work of ordination generally assigned to him, but is cautioned against precipitancy in the execution of his work: “Lay hands suddenly on no man.”§

Now the doctrine of laying on of hands, whatever that doctrine may be, should not only be in

\* Acts xiii. 1—3.

† Acts vi. 5, 6.

‡ 1 Tim. iv. 14.

§ 1 Tim. v. 22.

harmony with the whole subject through which we have been passing, but should specially fit and combine these cases, which lie at the very centre of the question.

Will the doctrine of apostolic grace, descending through ordination by a diocesan bishop, fit these cases, and bring them into harmony?

Not very easily. For there is no diocesan bishop found in any one of them. Then, in the first case, an apostle himself, Saul, stands reverently by the side of Barnabas to receive the imposition of the hands of Simeon, and Lucius, and Manaen, and doubtless others also whose office was inferior to his own, and whose very names have perished. In the third case, as we showed in our last lecture, ordination was from the hands of the elders setting Timothy apart to an office superior to their own, and circumcision was from the apostle. In the fourth case, if grace could descend to a recipient, irrespective of character, the motive for caution and delay, until character and fitness were ascertained, would be weakened, if not entirely removed.

The case of Saul, set apart to a special work by the laying on of the hands of the prophets and teachers at Antioch, harmonizes in general principle with that of Timothy, set apart to the office of evangelist, by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, and with the case of the whole tribe of Levi, set apart to office by the laying on of the hands of representatives from the people. In each case the hands of those who are inferior, as to

office, are upon the head of their superior, as to office, facts conclusive against the theory of grace descending by ordination.

But the doctrine of laying on of hands which we have been advocating, and which has been our guiding light through every part of the path we have hitherto trodden, is the very doctrine which opens and combines the cases now under discussion; and we feel that, as we draw nearer the centre of the subject, the light, as from a centre, shines brighter and warmer.

In the first of the four cases there was a direct and imperative revelation from the Holy Ghost declaring that the work was special, and pointing out, by name, the parties who were to be separated for its performance. One of those parties was an apostle, and the hands laid upon him could add nothing to the grace with which he was already endowed. But they could, and did, express the devout and heartfelt concurrence of those who, by fasting and prayer, had been in communion with God, and were now, in the clearness of prophetic light, one heart and mind with him in the work to which Saul and Barnabas had been called. In the second case, since the office of deacon related only to the stewardship of the funds which had been contributed by the people, their choice would be considered by the apostles as the appropriate and sufficient intimation of the will of God, in which they were bound to acquiesce. Their concurrence here would be the more cheerful, because their

hands, in the very act of imposition, became disencumbered from the care of money and lands, and were made free for the more vigorous discharge of their own spiritual ministry. They conveyed to the deacons, not the apostolic grace of office, but that which had been the unapostolic burden from which, as they had enough besides to carry, they felt that they were entitled to be relieved. In the third case, there was the prophecy going before on Timothy—declaring the office he was to fill—overpowering any objections which might have arisen in the minds of the presbytery on account of his youth—showing them the hand of God already upon him to form him for his work, which hand their's were, without hesitation, to follow. Around the last case, there is this light thrown. In instances where there is no prophetic revelation, let there be prudent delay, until a vigilant and prayerful observation shall have clearly discovered those intimations of the Divine will which are to be gathered from the ordinary sources of providential direction. Let not your hand be laid upon an individual until you can have reasonable satisfaction that God's hand, qualifying him for the work, has preceded yours, ordaining him to its discharge. You then perform an obedient and intelligent service. You put your hand to God's, and by your deliberate concurrence in the work, you help to clear the path and cheer the mind of the candidate for office, who may be trembling under a sense of its responsibility, and seeking the comforting indica-



tions of Divine guidance, in the conclusions and countenance of those who are more experienced than himself.

### III. In the bestowment of spiritual gifts.

These cases are put into a distinct class, because there is satisfactory reason to conclude that, to bestow gifts by the imposition of hands, and to appoint to office by the same rite, were two distinct and separate works: the first of which could be performed only by an apostle, and became the seal of his office, which another could not use; the second of which could be performed, without the presence of an apostle, by the elders already officiating in the church. The first, therefore, would cease, with what may be called the second generation of the church—the dying out of those on whom the hands of the apostles had been laid. The second would continue, the ordinary and permanent mode of ordaining to their office the ministers of the church. There are reasons to conclude that supernatural gifts were frequently bestowed on those who had not been appointed to office, and that the extension of the church was in various ways promoted by the abundance of the gifts which were distributed amongst its members generally. The apostle is speaking of the church as a body, and not of those who sustained the definite offices which are connected with its permanent organization, when, writing to the Corinthians, he says, “But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to

every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gift of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kind of tongues; to another interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”\* He doubtless refers to the distribution amongst them of these gifts when he asks, “Are not ye my work in the Lord? If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the *seal* of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.”†

This view of the church of Corinth will prepare us to follow the earlier footsteps of the apostles in the bestowment of spiritual gifts.

When the church at Jerusalem was all but broken up, and its members scattered abroad by the great persecution which arose, “Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing

\* 1 Corinth. xii. 7—13.

† 1 Corinth. ix. 1, 2.

and seeing the miracles which he did.”\* “Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (for as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) *Then laid they their hands on them*, and they received the Holy Ghost.”†

Philip could preach, could baptize, could work miracles, could perform all the ordinary, and some of the extraordinary functions of the ministry; but there was one thing which he could not do, which none but an apostle could do; and therefore two of the apostles, deputed from the rest, must come to Samaria to perform—he could not, by the laying on of his hands, confer the Holy Ghost. There can be no succession in the bestowment of this gift. You can connect the ordination of Philip with apostolic hands, you can infer his participation in the first baptism of the Spirit in the upper room at Jerusalem, you can find all Samaria wondering and rejoicing at the truth which he proclaims, and the power of miracles which he puts forth; but you cannot get from him, although you are within one step of the apostles and of Jerusalem, the gift of the Holy Ghost.

That gift he had himself, in all probability, like Stephen, who was full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, received before he was ordained to office.

\* Acts viii. 5, 6.

† Acts viii. 14—17.

But neither the original bestowment of the gift from heaven on the pentecostal day, without the laying on of apostles' hands, nor the ordaining to office, by the laying on of apostles' hands, could give the power of conveying the gift downwards. The Samaritans converted by his ministry, in general, and those who had been possessed by unclean spirits, who had been palsied, who had been lame, in particular, might rejoice with him in the knowledge of Christ, and might walk with him in obedience to all the laws of Christ; but they must wait until the two deputed apostles arrive before any of them can share with him in the power to heal the sick, or to exercise any supernatural gift.

That it was the power of supernatural gifts, and not appointment to office, which Peter and John did confer by the laying on of their hands, is obvious from the case of Simon. He did not want to purchase office in the church, nor the power of presenting to office; for, on the supposition that the apostle's hands had been laid on the Samaritan Christians to appoint to office, all offices must already have been abundantly supplied. What he coveted was the power to work miracles himself, and to enable others to do the same. The truth and power of the miracles which Philip had wrought had foiled all the arts of his sorcery and mortified his pride. Could he obtain that power, which Philip did not possess, of enabling others to work miracles in connection with himself, he might organize a body in dependence on himself, emerge

from the eclipse which he had suffered, and be again the "great one" of the city.

If farther proof that the gift of the Holy Ghost, by the laying on of the hands of the apostles, had no necessary connection with appointment to office, were required, it might be given in the case of the disciples whom Paul found at Ephesus. They had been baptized "unto John's baptism," but had "not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." They were "baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." "And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve."\*

Since they had not before been baptized in the name of Jesus, nor had even heard of the Holy Ghost, they could in no way have been previously connected with any Christian church. If by the laying on of the hands of Paul, and their consequent receiving of the Holy Ghost, they were appointed to office, where was the church in which their office was to be discharged, and for whose service they were ordained?

When the Holy Ghost was given, in its original bestowment on the one hundred and twenty who were assembled in the upper room at Jerusalem, and on the Gentiles who had come together in the house of Cornelius, without the laying on of the hands of the apostles, and afterwards, as at Samaria and Ephesus, by the laying on of their hands, the design was to provide for the rapid diffusion of

\* Acts xix. 6, 7.

Christianity by extraordinary means and instruments adapted to the extraordinary nature of the case. But when Christianity became located and settled in districts and cities, and churches had to be organized, then the offices necessary for the government and edification of the churches had to be determined and arranged. What those offices were we have shown in the preceding lecture. Individuals who had received the original bestowment of the Holy Ghost for general service might be, and were most likely to be, elected to office, as in the case of Philip and Stephen, and then they were ordained to that office, as in their case, by the laying on of hands. Individuals who had not received the extraordinary gift of the Holy Ghost might also be chosen to office, for supernatural gifts are not put into the catalogue of qualifications for which either Timothy or Titus were enjoined to look in those who might be appointed either bishops or deacons. The ordinary moral and spiritual qualifications, described in the Epistles of Timothy and Titus, were to be the permanent requisites for office, the extraordinary and supernatural endowments were to pass away. It was office, therefore, with its ordinary endowments, which became permanent, is now continued, will be perpetuated. All pretensions to have received, and to be able to convey by ordination, the gift of the Holy Ghost, which are now made, are consequently illusory, erroneous, in the highest degree presumptuous. If Philip, who had partaken of the first baptism of the

Holy Ghost, who had been ordained to office by the hands of the apostles, who had come fresh, and warm, and full of power from the midst of the fellowship of "the glorious company of the apostles," could not confer the gift of the Holy Ghost on the converts he had himself made in a city, excited with wonder and joy at his preaching, and at the miracles which his hands had wrought, what are we to think of the claims of those who say that they have received, and that they do confer the gift, now that all supernatural endowments have ceased, and no link of intercourse with the apostles can be formed?

In the passage which we have quoted from the Epistle to the Corinthians, Paul speaks only of the *manifestation of the Spirit*; and it is by putting another verse, from another part of the epistle, into connexion with it that we obtain a right idea of *his own* relation to the bestowment of the Spirit's gifts. Perhaps, had Peter and John written to the Christians of Samaria, the case would have been the same. They would have written of the Spirit's distribution of his gifts, not of the laying on of their own hands. To the eye of a spectator, and for the page of an historian, the hands of the apostles are the most prominent object. To the apostles themselves, it is the Divine agent which appears most prominent, which is all in all. The principle of that passage, "Neither is he that planteth anything, nor he that watereth anything, but God that giveth the increase," pervaded all their works and all their thoughts. Especially

when they were about to lay their hands on an individual for the conferring gifts so wonderful in their character, and to see in the exercise of the gifts, when conferred, a new seal to their own apostleship, would their minds be absorbed in the contemplation of that heavenly agent who condescended to make their hands the visible tokens and instruments of his gracious operations. His work on their minds was always in harmony with his work by their hands. His own will in the case, communicated to them by internal illumination, became their will. He wrought in them to will and to do of his good pleasure; and they wrought with him for the accomplishment of his purposes. Their hand was the instrument: the Spirit of God was the agent. Spectators beheld the visible hand. They saw only him that was invisible. Their mind and hand were one with him in that which they felt to be his work; and, while they gave him all the glory, they realized in the highest degree that which we have stated to be the doctrine of laying on of hands, which, put in its briefest form, is, *Man one with God in declaring his purposes towards others, on whom some special blessing is to descend, or by whom some sacred work is to be performed.*

We have now gone through the Scriptural cases of laying on of hands. We have seen how one principle, or doctrine, pervades, illumines, harmonizes, and combines the whole. The range, through



which we can follow the performance of the rite, is more wide, and its use more permanent and unchanged than is the case with any other. The family priesthood of the patriarchs is superseded by the national priesthood of Aaron; and that is, at length, abolished by the heavenly priesthood, for the world, of Christ. The rite of circumcision departs to make way for that of baptism; and the paschal solemnity merges into the supper of the Lord. Amid all these changes the rite of laying on of hands remains—the visible link which holds together the three successive dispensations, and which gathers around it the most beautiful, as well as the most venerable, associations from the whole. The human hand, employed in the rites which have been abolished, as well as in those which are now established and to be perpetuated, continues the same in its form and structure amid the infinite variety and changes of the works in which it is the operating agent. In the rite, unchanged, of laying on of hands, simplicity becomes sublimity, pomp and mystery manifest confusion and obscurity of vision. Restored to its position among the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, it separates itself from the antichristian theory of apostolical succession, which has encumbered, obscured, fettered, mutilated it, and it freely moves in holy companionship with Jacob in his dying benediction, and uttering to his descendants the form in which they are to bless one another; with Moses putting some of his honour upon Joshua, giving Israel a leader to

complete his own unfinished work, and that leader a charge as to how the work should be performed ; with Aaron and his descendants as they receive the victims devoted by the hand of the people, perform the rites of propitiation, and put the name and the blessing of God upon the pardoned penitents ; with the tribe of Levi dedicated to the service of the sanctuary, and the congregation of Israel presenting them as an offering to the Lord ; with the apostles in their miracles of healing, their appointments to office, their gift of the Holy Ghost, the seal of their uncommunicable office ; with elders, the true bishops of the church, in their divinely-appointed offices, and their legitimate functions ; with the Lord himself, who in all things must have the pre-eminence, in his going about to do good, and heal all manner of sickness and disease among the people—in his condescension to little children, in his eye the embryos of future labourers in his cause, the sharers of his inheritance of the kingdom of heaven—in his work of blessing as he ascended from Bethany—in his raising the fainting spirit of John, overpowered with the first glance of his celestial glory, that he might renew his sight of that glory, as with an eagle's eye, and range, as with an eagle's wing, through all the visions of the apocalypse—in his coming the second time, in like manner as he went up, to bless his whole redeemed church, by presenting it an assembly of kings and priests in a solemn act of consecration to the eter-

nal service and glory of his Father, and their Father, of his God, and their God.

This is the range of the subject. And now a very serious question arises, Can it be that only twenty-six individuals, among the millions of England and Wales, have any authority to administer this simple, primitive, expressive rite of laying on of hands? Is it part of the exclusive prerogative of the prelates?

It is true that, under the patriarchal dispensation, only one individual is recorded in the performance of the rite; but then that individual represents to us us all offices, secular as well as sacred, combined in one person, and the one case recorded stands as the selected memorial of an established patriarchal custom. Under the Jewish dispensation, we find that both Moses and Aaron, the priests in successive generations, and the elders representing the people, and even the people themselves, when they offered the tribe of Levi to the Lord, performed the rite. In the New Testament, we find the Lord himself, the apostles, the evangelists, the elders of the church generally, the prophets and teachers of Antioch in particular, performing this rite. How is it that diocesan bishops only can now perform it?

We have shown, in the preceding lecture, that the prelates have borrowed, without returning again, the title which the New Testament gives to the elders of the church generally, and that they

dare not wear the title which belongs to the office of those to whom they say they are the “true successors.” How is it that, in this very equivocal position as to title, they have succeeded to the whole right and authority, by whomsoever previously possessed, of laying on of hands? In claiming the sole inheritance of this rite, do they not show themselves “lords of the heritage,” taking away the functions, as well as the titles of others, at their pleasure?

Having taken the rite into their sole prerogative, what have they made of it? The character of the workmanship corresponds with the mode of the acquisition. They profess to make this rite the channel in which to convey, from the apostles, grace which the apostles themselves nowhere tell us that they possessed. When the apostles laid their hands upon the heads of the seven deacons, they professed to convey to them the care of distributing the funds of the church, which care they found an encumbrance to themselves. When the prelate lays his hands upon the head of one whom he is to make a deacon, he professes to convey to him, from these apostles, the power to give sacramental efficacy to every drop of water which his own hand may subsequently employ in baptism. By what strange alchemy have the alms of the church been transmuted into water that can regenerate? and at what point in the progress did the coin turn into water? When Timothy or Titus, either of them singly or in conjunction with others, ordained elders in any

place, they ordained, by one imposition of their hands to the complete and perfect office at once, those who, like themselves, were to minister the word. When prelates, by a second imposition of their hands on one whom they have previously made deacon, exalt him to the full orders of the priest, they profess to make him a minister of the altar, whose own hand, by virtue of the grace conveyed to him in the second imposition, can change the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper into the very body and blood of the Lord himself. And *thus* they convey, from the apostles, that grace which these apostles thankfully received from the Lord at his table, in "breaking bread" with the disciples! How far, in this miraculous transformation of apostolic grace, do they leave behind them that simple power which once turned water into wine! When the hands of a prelate are laid upon the head of a deacon to confer the order of the priesthood, he says, "Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a priest in the church of God now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands, Whose sins thou dost remit, they are remitted; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained." When did the apostles, while their hands were upon the head of an individual, employ such words as these? When they laid their hands on the disciples who had been converted by Philip to confer the gift of miracles, "*They prayed* for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost." Is there no difference between praying for the Holy

Spirit, and pretending authoritatively to convey him, as though he were already in your hands? Is there no difference between the gift of healing, or of tongues, and the absolution from sin? Is there no difference between the manifold and wondrous signs which came in answer to the prayers of the apostles, and the total destitution of any sign in the oft-repeated work of their pretended successors? The words of most solemn import in the form of ordination are the utterance of the Divine Redeemer himself. Whatever power he meant to convey in them, and did convey to his apostles to whom they were uttered, they formed no part of their ordination to their apostolic office, and were not accompanied by the imposition of his hands. They were uttered to them at his first interview with them in the upper room, on the evening of the day of his resurrection. "He showed unto them his hands and his side." "He said to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he *breathed on them*, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained."\*

What authority is there for connecting these words, so sacredly peculiar, both in time and manner, to the Lord himself, with the rite of laying on of hands? Can the hands which have taken, at their pleasure, the titles and functions of those who are

\* John xx. 20—23.

condescendingly called inferiors in office take, with the same impunity, the most solemn and peculiar functions of the risen Lord himself? Is there the same power in the mortal hand, which yesterday might have been gathering up the filthy lucre, and to-morrow may be putrifying in the grave, as there is in the *breath* of the now transformed and immortal Saviour, who dieth no more, but lives, as the Father, to quicken whom he will? Is there not a light which goes far towards solving the mystery of the working of that ambition in heaven by which angels fell, in the embodiments of the same principle which, in the frail and dying form of feeble men, has been working in the church on earth?

English protestants have adopted this form of ordination from the Romish hierarchy. Is it not time that there should be a second Reformation? If some are turning their backs on the first Reformation, and are adjusting their contracted vision to read, amid artificial and illusive lights, the legends of mediæval ages, should not others, who have professed better things, go forward, and, expanding and invigorating their vision for the noon-day light of the holy oracles, leave behind them those parts of their ancient formularies which have conveyed the leaven of popery, now working so fearfully in their church, and which parts they cannot show to be in accordance with "God's word." Is it not made manifest, as to your formularies, that, in them, "Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that

a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened."

As the rite of laying on of hands is used by the Romish hierarchy, there is, in addition to the inconsistencies and presumptuous claims already noticed, the tacit acknowledgment of the want of any thing approaching to prophetic light and certainty in its performance. When Jacob laid his hands upon the sons of Joseph, God's purposes for coming generations stood out clearly to his view. When the presbytery laid their hands upon Timothy, stripping though he was, God's purpose as to his future course, and work, and office was unfolded by prophecy, and he was ordained evangelist at once. When he himself, in the absence of distinct revelation as to individuals, exercised the prayerful and prudent vigilance and delay which the apostle enjoined, he could, with enlightened persuasion as to God's previous choice and purposes as to others, ordain them to the office of bishop at once. There is no portion of this light, in which a free and generous hand can work co-operative with God's hand, in the Romish hierarchy. The work of ordination is therefore divided into seven portions or stages—porter, reader, exorcist, acolyte, subdeacon, deacon, priest, bishop. The bishop could see his own way, as he himself advanced, and can see the way, as he helps others onward, only from point to point; and therefore laboriously accomplishes, by a sevenfold operation, that which, if the bishops in the two cases



are like one another, Timothy was instructed to accomplish at once.

Another serious question now arises. Should we be faithful friends and witnesses to the truth, if we were to permit the prelates to retain the sole use of this rite, which they have taken to themselves by usurpation, and which they have so egregiously misrepresented and perverted? It is not one of the supernatural endowments which those only could exercise on whom the hands of an apostle had been laid. We can perform it now, just as easily as Timothy could do it of old, if only we can do it rightly, and with scriptural authority. The instructions to Timothy, as to the administration of this rite, are not indeed given with the same precision and fulness as are the instructions which relate to the qualifications for office; but the caution given in the same epistle with the instructions as to the qualifications, "Lay hands suddenly on no man," clearly implies that the laying on of hands accompanied the appointment to office. The instructions as to the qualifications for office are permanent, carefully separated from those supernatural, though temporary, endowments, which, to a superficial observer, would appear the prime requisites. The caution against precipitancy is permanent, and put where it could be most briefly and emphatically expressed, in connection with that rite which admitted to office, and manifested the judgment, as to fitness and call, which had been formed by those

who were to be employed in the work of ordination.

If any contend that the laying on of hands was employed only in the communication of supernatural gifts, they must admit that Timothy could confer such gifts, and that the elders who laid their hands on him could do the same. This admission takes the seal of the apostleship out of the hands of the apostles themselves, nullifies their authority, and introduces confusion and uncertainty into every part of their work. On this admission, Paul, instead of coming nothing behind the chiefest of the apostles, and claiming the Corinthians in their diversified and abundant spiritual gifts, as the seal of his apostleship, becomes a recipient with Barnabas of gifts which the prophets and teachers at Antioch could confer; and wears the impress of the seal employed by another, instead of manifesting the freedom and power of the hand which could work signs and wonders among the people, by virtue of the authority given him by the Lord himself.

If the question should be proposed, Who are now authorized to perform the rite of laying on of hands? we answer, That we are not much concerned strictly to define the limits within which the rite should be observed. The doctrine of the rite which we have been advocating has emancipated us from the notion, which still fetters the minds of many who are free at other points, that there is anything like the grace of a succession in

the case ; while the range of our subject has presented us with examples, one in the principle which pervades them, but beautifully diversified in the circumstances which surround them. The doctrine, in its inner life, is insight into God's purposes towards others; in its outward manifestations, it may become as multiform as the objects which those purposes are intended to accomplish. The requisites for the discharge of the rite are sanctified knowledge, with the influence over the minds of others which grows with that knowledge, rather than ecclesiastical pedigree or specialities of office.

The Holy Spirit, in the upper room at Jerusalem, and in the house of Cornelius the Gentile, descended, in its miraculous endowments, on many who had never received the imposition of the apostle's hands. His working, without the apostle's hands, did not take the seal of their apostleship from them. His so working, by the laying on of any other hands than those of the apostles, would have done this. The distinctness and authority given by the impress of the seal were best seen when they were viewed in this light: "That which the Holy Spirit has done originally, in the first miraculous baptism of Jews and Gentiles, he now continues to do in every place in which we, the apostles, labour, but only by the imposition of our hands."

As, in the original provision for the diffusion of Christianity, there was a baptism of supernatural gifts which went before and, in these

cases, superseded the necessity of the laying on of the apostle's hands, so, for the revival of Christianity, amid systems which have corrupted its forms or permitted the frosty icicles to gather around them, there may be a baptism, for the ordinary office of the ministry, without the laying on of any human hands. And if those, to whose ministry the Holy Spirit has set the seal which is given when a ministry is made extensively the instrument of conversion and edification, shall see it consistent with truth, and conducive to order and solemnity, to introduce the candidates for the ministry to their office by this scriptural rite of ordination, who shall forbid them the use of the rite, even though no official hands were ever imposed on themselves? Let them be careful to find, not a true pedigree, but a true doctrine. Let them content themselves with a clearly-expounded scriptural example. While others, in conferring orders, stand with their face to the past, looking back on the boasted glories of their long succession, let them, in the imposition of their hands, fix their eye on the future, that they may follow their vocation in the onward march of Christianity, and perform their work in the light of God's purposes for the extension of his church and the conversion of the world.

If, in a church whose ministers have corrupted the truth, and have brought in another gospel—have substituted the worn-out ceremonies of Jewish rituals for the preaching of the unsearchable riches of Christ, there should arise a body of individuals

who have access to the holy Scriptures, and are resolved to walk by their light, who could forbid the selecting from their number the individual most gifted, that he might devote himself to prayer and the ministry of the word? And if, having sought direction from the Great Head of the church by prayer, they were to set him apart for his work by the laying on of their own hands, they would but follow the example of the whole congregation of Israel, when they laid their hands upon the tribe of Levi, and dedicated them to the service of the Lord. This would be a much more intelligent and legitimate use of Jewish analogies than any which is given in the writings and claims of those who found their official titles and functions upon them.

It is, however, an extreme case which we have hypothetically put. The Reformers, to whom the church and the world are so deeply indebted, have been, with very few exceptions, men educated and devoted to the Christian ministry. Any practical difficulty, therefore, in the question, as to who is empowered to lay on hands in ordaining others to office, has very rarely occurred. Those who had brought an official standing with them into the new communions which were formed, as a matter of course administered the rite of ordination, and set an example that others might follow in their steps. The idea of some kind of succession in ordination is, therefore, the idea which, more or less clearly defined, prevails among all denominations of Christians. It does amongst ourselves. We look back

to the noble band of two thousand confessors who suffered the loss of all things for their unflinching adherence to the claims of truth and conscience. Our homage to the truth which they confessed finds devout expression in every ordination service; and our use of the simple, venerable rite of laying on of hands, which we have received from them, has been a practical and influential testimony against the usurpation of this rite by the prelates. Let us not withdraw our testimony. To bear it is part of our appointed work. It goes deeper into the mind and conscience of those whose position requires them to deny the authority of our ministry than we sometimes suppose. It is the truth, and we do well to bring it publicly into the light of day. Error, which affects dignity by retiring from the public eye, would not stand securely by its side.

Do we bear our practical testimony to the *whole truth* on this question? We ordain to the pastoral office by the laying on of the hands of the elders. Our scriptural example and authority in this case is the ordination of Timothy by the presbytery, and the instructions given to him and Titus as to those who might possess the required qualifications for office. But the instructions given to Timothy relate to the deacon as well as to the bishop, and the first case of ordination to office, as connected with apostolic usages, is the ordination, by the imposition of hands, of the seven deacons. That

our testimony on this question then may be not the voice of custom and succession derived from our fathers, but the voice of conviction and obedience deriving its utterance from the Scripture, we must go farther, and employ the rite of laying on of hands in setting apart our deacons. If it be asked, By whom should the deacons be ordained? the answer may be easily given. The deacons were to relieve the apostles from the care of the funds of the church. The hands of those who were to be disencumbered from this burden were laid upon them. For the same reason those whose relief in this particular is now contemplated in the continuance of the office should be employed—the hands of the pastors upon the heads of the deacons.

We wear the designation which was given to the disciples at Antioch. Our testimony on this question would become more complete, harmonious, and powerful, if we were to follow an example, given at that place, strictly applicable to many circumstances of constant occurrence amongst ourselves, and, in itself, of the highest authority.

When the hands of the prophets and teachers at Antioch were laid upon Saul and Barnabas, the rite could not be employed either to confer office or supernatural gifts. The object of the rite is beautifully expressed in the record of the accomplishment of their mission: “And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia, and thence sailed to Antioch, from whence

they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled.”\* The same language is employed in connection with a second mission on which the apostle went from Antioch with another associate: “And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.” The inference may fairly be deduced that this second commendation, like the first, was by the rite of laying on of hands with prayer.

The use we commonly make of this case is to derive an example from it for ordaining to the ministerial work generally, rather than to any flock or charge in particular; and hence we ordain our missionaries by the imposition of hands, commending them to the work of the ministry among the heathen. But if a pastor who had been previously ordained becomes a missionary, or if a missionary ordained on his going forth return, and is sent forth a second time, there is, in either case, no imposition of hands. The feeling cherished in these cases is, that it would detract from the character of the first ordination, in its sufficiency and completeness, if there were a second laying on of hands; and thus we betray the lurking amongst us of the notions derived from a succession by ordination, and the conferring of orders. So difficult is it, even when the main root of bitterness has been turned out, completely to clear the ground of all the fibres which it threw on every hand around.

\* Acts xiv. 25, 26.



The necessities of the times specially demand from us, untrammelled as we are by any human authority, free as we are in all things shown to be the will of God to render immediate obedience, a clear, consistent, decisive testimony on this rite of laying on of hands. In this rite all the assumed virtue of an apostolical succession is held to be concentrated. Let our practice become a testimony, not only against the usurpation of the rite in its sole employment by the hands of the prelate, but also a testimony against the principle of a succession as involved in the rite. We shall then more frequently employ the rite, and more effectually oppose the antiquated error.

Let us look now into the light of this high and authoritative example at Antioch, and see if it is not a light which we might easily, and with great advantage to the cause of truth, reflect upon the eyes of the church and of our country. There is in the case no conferring either of gift or of office, and therefore there could be no charge of undue assumption against any who should follow the example here set. Paul and Barnabas in the first case, Paul again, and Silas in the second, are the recipients in the case, and therefore our most honoured pastors could lose nothing by following the example. In what cases might the example be followed? In all cases in which there is designation to any special work, and in which there are, both as to the parties and the work, clearly indicated providential direction. In entering on a

second pastoral charge, the solemnity of the service of designation might be increased, by the use of this rite, with as much propriety as was that connected with the original ordination. In every departure of a missionary who had returned, whether it be to his original or to another field of labour, the tenderness and solemnity of the parting service might be augmented by his standing, like Paul when he went a second time from Antioch, beneath the imposition of the hands of honoured brethren, while prayer is again offered on his behalf. A deputation like that once sent to the transatlantic churches might be commended to its work by the observance of this rite. In a word, every important occasion which calls for an appointment of those who are esteemed and trusted that they may be employed in some special work might, by a fair application of the principle derived from this case at Antioch, receive their designation to the work by prayer and the laying on of hands.

It not unfrequently occurs that the father of a youthful minister is present at the ordination of his son. The gift of the son to the ministry of the church may be an answer to paternal prayers—the fruit of paternal instruction—the sacrifice of services which might have contributed to paternal comfort and advantage. The father may himself sustain that office to which the seven were set apart by the laying on of the hands of the apostles. Whether he sustain that office or does not, what valid

reason could be urged against the union of his hand with the official hands which are laid upon his son? Would not that union infuse a new element of tenderness into the service which every heart would feel intelligently mingling with its most sacred emotions, and present a visible link which would connect the recent Christian rite with the ancient and venerable patriarchal customs.

The prelate claims something patriarchal, as another part of his sole prerogative, when he lays his hand upon the head of the young in the rite of confirmation. However unintelligent and erroneous that rite may be, when it claims affinity to the apostolic work of confirming the souls of the disciples, and confirming the churches—however delusive and injurious, if it be supposed that the grace of establishment in a Christian state of salvation goes with the imposition of the prelate's hand to all the recipients of the rite—yet, under a dispensation of religion which inherits the blessings promised to Abraham and pronounced by Jacob, in their fullest stream and richest combination, can faith never become prophetic of the individual course in which those blessings are about to flow? Can Christian piety never grow, with age, to patriarchal stature, to patriarchal fulness of feeling and clearness of vision? When an individual, whose character is matured, whose form is venerable, whose heart is the abode of devotion and love, comes into inter-

course with susceptible and hopeful youth, would there be any impropriety in his laying "holy hands," which have been often lifted up in supplication, upon the head, while he offers the prayer of faith which realizes the blessings held forth in the promises made to us and to our children? In contending against unauthorized ceremonies in religion, is it not possible that we may go to the opposite extreme, and denude it of some outward and visible manifestations of its beauty and power which are simple, natural, and edifying? If we could take our children into the presence of the Lord himself, and ask him to put his hands upon them and bless them, our knowledge of what he once did when such a request was presented to him might warrant us to expect a similar compliance. In his compliance on that occasion, he followed a custom in which patriarchs had gone before him—which had been perpetuated until the time of his own appearing—which must have been familiar to the minds of those who presented their request to him. Was not his compliance, under these circumstances, a sanction of the past, and an example for the future? We can derive it through him, not as a part of the Levitical institutions which in his work he abolished, but as a part of the preceding patriarchal dispensation which had not been superseded by the Aaronic priesthood. The form of blessing which Jacob delivered, "God make thee as Ephraim and Manasseh," was not the form of

blessing appropriated to Aaron and his sons. Israel generally, after the establishment of the priesthood in one family, might still bless in the more ancient patriarchal form. Wherever patriarchal qualities are found inspiring respect and commanding influence—the hoary head wearing the crown of righteousness—the official hands which have borne the burden and heat of the day, and faithfully discharged the duties of their ministry—the venerable grandsire gathering his descendants around him—or the dying father committing his helpless children to an unchangeable God, in the exercise of faith in his promises,—in either of these cases there might be, in the light, and with the sanction of the Saviour's example, the employment of the ancient rite. Its revival would give appropriate expression to the best and holiest feelings of age in intercourse with youth—would furnish occasions of deep solemnity in the exercises of domestic piety—would bring around them associations derived from the earliest days of the church—from the most impressive scenes described in holy Scripture—from the presence and work of the Lord himself. When our children have been trained in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and his hand is seen working gracious dispositions in them, might not the hand of aged piety put upon them then be a manifestation of our joy in his work, and be a true “*confirmation*” without the pomp, the errors, the delusions, which too often accompany that rite, as it is usually administered?

Thus the end of our subject is connected with its beginning—an application of the rite, derived from the Saviour's own example, is connected with the first illustration of the rite, as derived from the ancient patriarchal dispensation. We have endeavoured to trace out, and lay open again to the view, the entire foundation on which it rested. That foundation is so extensive and complete as clearly to indicate that it once sustained a structure much more capacious and diversified in its parts than is now seen rising from it. We shall be rewarded for our work, if it should prove that we have contributed in any degree to restore to its true position and use in the church of God the doctrine and the rite "of laying on of hands."

#### ERRATA.

Page 20, note, line 8, for *inaction* read *enaction*.

Page 35, supply *ye* at the beginning of the first line.

Page 66, for *Egyptian* read *Egyptians*.

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S. Vaughan. "Ritualism". 88, 89.

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